

INTRODUCTION
TO
AMERICAN LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION
TO
AMERICAN LITERATURE

PART I.

BY

F. V. N. PAINTER, A.M., D.D.

PROFESSOR OF MODERN LANGUAGES IN ROANOKE COLLEGE.
AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF EDUCATION, INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH
LITERATURE, ETC.



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PREFACE.

THIS work is intended to be a companion volume to the "Introduction to English Literature," which has been cordially received by teachers in all parts of our country. As will be seen on examination, it follows substantially the same plan, though its limited field makes a fuller treatment desirable and feasible.

What was said in the preface to that work about teaching literature may be substantially repeated here. Literature cannot be learned from the ordinary manuals. While they furnish many bare facts about literature, they do not present literature itself. As a result, the student knows nothing by his own investigation, and his literary training is reduced to an exercise of memory.

The present work aims to introduce the student to American literature itself, with such helps as will give him an intelligent appreciation of it. The introductory chapter contains, it is hoped, some helpful observations. The "General Survey" of each period presents the conditions under which the various authors wrote. The sketches of the representative writers give with considerable fulness the leading biographical facts, together with a critical estimate of their works. The selections for special study, which are chosen to illustrate the distinguishing characteristics of each author, are supplied with explanatory notes. In this way, it may fairly be claimed, the student will gain a clear and satisfactory knowledge of our best authors.

But in pursuing this method, another important result is obtained. In addition to this knowledge of our principal writers, the student learns something of the manner in which any author is to be studied. His literary taste is developed ; and in his subsequent studies in literature, he will be capable, in some measure at least, of forming an intelligent and independent judgment.

It should not be forgotten that this book, as its name indicates, is but an introduction to American literature. It is not intended to be a comprehensive manual of reference. It treats only of the leading periods and principal writers. In using the book in the class-room, for which it is chiefly designed, it is not necessary that the students be restricted to the texts supplied. If time permits, it is desirable that the study of the various authors be more extended. Other texts may be introduced in their proper periods ; and for such teachers as may desire to follow this course, or to give merely a general preparation for the intelligent reading of our leading authors, an edition is published without the annotated selections.

With grateful feelings for the kind reception accorded his "Introduction to English Literature," the author sends forth the present work in the hope that it may be found likewise to supply a want.

F. V. N. PAINTER.

ROANOKE COLLEGE,

March, 1897.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

To meet the requirements of all institutions where American literature is regularly taught, the book is published *with* and *without* the annotated selections.

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AMERICAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION.

No other department of study is more important than that of literature. It not only supplies the mind with knowledge, but also refines it in thought and feeling. Literature embodies the best thought of the world, an acquaintance with which is the essential element of culture. Of all literature, that of our native country stands in closest relation to us, and naturally possesses for us the greatest interest.

The term literature needs to be carefully considered, and its general and its restricted meaning clearly comprehended. In its widest sense, literature may be regarded as including the aggregate body of printed matter in the world. It is thus a record of the acts, thoughts, and emotions of the human family. Its magnitude renders it absolutely impossible for any man ever to become acquainted with more than a very small part of it. The largest libraries, notably that of the British Museum and the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris, number more than a million volumes.

This general or universal literature, of which we have just spoken, is obviously made up of national literatures. A national literature is composed of the literary produc-

tions of a particular nation. After reaching a state of civilization, every nation expresses its thoughts and feelings in writing. Thus we have the literature of Greece, of Rome, of England, of America, and of other nations both ancient and modern.

But the word literature has also a restricted meaning, which it is important to grasp. In any literary production we may distinguish between the *thoughts* that are presented, and the *manner* in which they are presented. We may say, for example, "The sun is rising;" or, ascending to a higher plane of thought and emotion, we may present the same fact in the language of Thomson:—

" But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad."¹

It is thus apparent that the interest and value of literature are largely dependent upon the manner or form in which the facts are presented. In its restricted sense, literature includes only those works that are polished or artistic in form. The classic works of a literature are those which present ideas of general and permanent interest in a highly finished or artistic manner.

Literature is influenced or determined by whatever affects the thought and feeling of a people. Among the most potent influences that determine the character of a literature, whether taken in a broad or in a restricted sense, are *race*, *epoch*, and *surroundings*. This fact should be well borne in mind, for it renders a philosophy of literature possible. We cannot fully understand any literature,

¹ The Seasons. Summer, line 81.

nor justly estimate it, without an acquaintance with the national traits of the writers, the general character of the age in which they lived, and the physical and social conditions by which they were surrounded. This fact shows the intimate relation between literature and history.

It has been questioned whether we have an American literature. But there is no reasonable ground for doubt. A fair survey of the facts will show that the literature of this country is distinctive in its thought and feeling. Our best works are not an echo of the literature of England, but a new and valuable contribution to the literature of the world. The best of Irving's writings, the tales of Hawthorne, the "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha" of Longfellow, not to mention many others, are filled with American scenery, American thought, and American character.

During the first two centuries of our history, while Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith were adding lustre to English letters, our country produced but few works that deserve a place in classic literature. It could hardly have been otherwise. Our people were devoting their energies chiefly to the great task of subduing a wild continent, building towns and cities, producing mechanical inventions, conquering political independence, and establishing a social order based on the principle of human equality and human freedom. These achievements are no less important than the production of an elegant literature, and really form the basis upon which the arts and sciences naturally rest. Material prosperity and political independence bring the leisure and culture that foster letters. It was so in the age of Pericles, of Augustus, of Elizabeth, and of Louis XIV.

The literature of America is the youngest of national literatures. While we must seek its beginnings in the early part of the seventeenth century, it is scarcely more than two generations ago that our literature entered upon a vigorous development. Though there are two great names in the last century,—those of Franklin and Edwards,—our polite literature really begins with Irving, Bryant, and Cooper, in the first quarter of the present century. This is a recent date in comparison with the literature of the leading nations of Europe.

The literary history of England extends through no fewer than twelve centuries ; and already five hundred years ago it had produced in Chaucer one of the world's great writers. The literary history of France covers an equally extended period ; and already in the Middle Ages it counted several famous epics. In Germany the great "Nibelungen Lied" was composed in the twelfth century. While it is true that we are "heirs of all the ages," and as such have inherited the literary treasures of the past, the growth of our literature has been too short to realize the fulness of power that will come with greater maturity of age.

Within the present century, American literature has had a remarkable development. In various departments—history, criticism, poetry—it has fairly vied with that of the mother country. Yet our highest literary achievements probably lie in the future. With a territory capable of supporting a population of five hundred millions, the task of the American people is not yet half accomplished. Material interests and social problems will continue, it may be for a long time, to absorb a large part of the best talent of our land. We are at present living our epic

poem, — the greatest the world has seen. But after this period of ardent striving and conflict is past, our golden age will come; and, having time to listen, we shall, perhaps, encourage some Homer or Milton to sing.

No other country seems to present more favorable conditions for the development of a great literature. The most interesting factor in literature is the human element, — the presentation of the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of men. As literature naturally reflects national life, the nature of this element depends upon the culture and experience of the people. Nowhere else has life been more varied and more intense than in America; and nowhere else, in the years to come, will it afford richer and more picturesque materials.

American literature is an offshoot of English literature, and shares the life of the parent stock. It uses the same language; and its earliest writers were colonists who had received their education in England. The culture of this country is distinctively English in origin and character; the differences are but modifications growing out of the new environment. We owe our laws and our religion chiefly to England; and the political independence achieved through the Revolution did not withdraw us from the humanizing influence of English letters.

In recent years, through the importation of French, German, and Russian books, our literary culture, as in other progressive countries, has become more cosmopolitan in character. But before that time, our reading was confined almost exclusively to English authors. The great English classics, from Chaucer down, we justly claim as our natural heritage. The leading movements in the literary history of England have been reflected in America.

In many cases a similarity of thought and style may be traced, as between Goldsmith and Irving, Scott and Cooper, Carlyle and Emerson. But this resemblance has not risen from feeble or conscious imitation; it has not interfered with the individuality of our authors, nor impaired the excellence of their works.

The literary history of our country may be divided into several periods, the general character of which is more or less sharply defined, though their limits naturally shade into one another by almost imperceptible degrees. The first period, which includes nearly the whole of the seventeenth century, may be called the First Colonial Period. The principal productions of this period represent, not American, but English, culture, and are concerned chiefly with a description of the New World, with the story of its colonization, or with a discussion of the theological questions that grew out of the great Protestant Reformation in Europe. The next period, beginning with the eighteenth century, and extending to the Revolution, may be known as the Second Colonial Period. In the literature of this period, American life is reflected more fully, and two writers, Franklin and Edwards, stand out with great prominence. Then follows what we may designate the Revolutionary Period, extending from the Revolution to the War of 1812. The dominant influence in this period was the establishment of a new and independent government. Here belong the names of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Jay. This was followed by an era of literary bloom, which may be characterized as the First National Period. It covers the time lying between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, and furnishes the beginning of what is called polite literature, or *belles-lettres*, in

this country. To this period belong the greatest names of our literary history, — Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and others. Lastly, we have the present period, which for convenience may be called the Second National Period. It begins with the Civil War, and exhibits a broad cosmopolitan tendency. Though it has produced but few writers of pre-eminent ability, it is characterized by unexampled literary activity, and by great excellence of literary form.

FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

JOHN SMITH. COTTON MATHER.

(See sketches at the close of this section.)

OTHER WRITERS.

WILLIAM STRACHEY, born 1585; secretary of the Virginia Colony 1610-1612. Wrote "Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates," and "Historie of Travaile into Virginia."

GEORGE SANDYS (1577-1644). Removed to America in 1621, and became treasurer of the Virginia Colony. Translated in Virginia ten books of Ovid's "Metamorphoses."

WILLIAM BRADFORD (1588-1657). One of the Mayflower colonists, governor of Plymouth for many years. "History of Plymouth Colony" from 1620 to 1647.

JOHN WINTHROP (1588-1649). Came to Massachusetts in 1630, and was governor for many years. "History of New England" from 1630 to 1649.

JOHN COTTON (1585-1652). Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Migrated to Boston in 1633, and became pastor of the First Church. A distinguished preacher. "Singing of Psalms a Gospel Ordinance."

EDWARD JOHNSON (1599-1672). Came to New England in 1630. Was a representative in the General Court or legislature of Massachusetts for several terms. "Wonder-working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England."

JOHN ELIOT (1604-1690). Graduated at Cambridge in 1623, and came to Boston in 1631. "The Apostle to the Indians," into whose language he translated the Bible. In 1660 he published in England, "The Christian Commonwealth; or, The Civil Policy of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

ANNE BRADSTREET (1612-1672). Wife of Governor Bradstreet. The earliest writer of verse in America. Her first volume was published in England under the title, "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America."

INCREASE MATHER (1638-1723). Graduated at Harvard in 1656; took his M.A. degree at Trinity College, Dublin. Pastor of Second Church in Boston; for six years (1685-1701) president of Harvard College. His publications number one hundred and sixty.

I.

FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD.

(1607-1689.)

GENERAL SURVEY. — The English were slow in establishing colonies in the New World. While Spain was subduing Mexico and a large part of South America, they remained comparatively inactive. The French were ahead of them in Canada. But when at last the English undertook the work of colonization, the Anglo-Saxon vigor asserted its superiority, and took possession of the fairest part of the American continent. From insignificant and unpromising beginnings, the English colonies rapidly developed into a great nation, rivalling the mother country not only in commercial interests, but also in science and literature.

The English occupation of this country began early in the seventeenth century with the establishment of two colonies, which were as different in character as they were widely removed from each other in space. The first of these colonies was founded in 1607 at Jamestown in Virginia; the other in 1620 at Plymouth in New England. Both settlements, in their subsequent development, were destined to play an important part in the political and literary history of our country. In a measure they represented two different tendencies in politics and religion: the Virginia colonists upholding the Church of England

and standing by the king; the New England colonists favoring a change in the English Church, and adhering to the Parliament. The one was thus conservative, the other progressive, — characteristics that are perceptible at the present day.

Virginia. — It is beyond the scope of the present work to follow in detail the various trials and vicissitudes of the young settlement at Jamestown. The story is well known. Nearly the whole century was consumed in getting the colony firmly on its feet. For a time disease carried off a large number of the colonists and discouraged the rest. The Indians frequently became unfriendly, and made repeated attempts to massacre the colonists. Many of the governors were incompetent and selfish; and the energies of the people were at times wasted by dissension and strife. One man alone, during this early period, was able to plan and execute wisely; and that was Captain John Smith.

At various times during the century the colony received new accessions of immigrants. After the Civil War in England, and the establishment of the Protectorate under Cromwell, many of the Royalists, adherents of Charles I., sought a home in the New World, and gave a distinct Cavalier tone to Virginia society. The manners of the mother country were in a measure reproduced. "The Virginia planter was essentially a transplanted Englishman in tastes and convictions, and emulated the social amenities and the culture of the mother country. Thus in time was formed a society distinguished for its refinement, executive ability, and generous hospitality, for which the Ancient Dominion is proverbial." ¹

¹ Winsor, Narrative and Critical History of America, Vol. III., p. 153.

It will be readily understood that the conditions in Virginia during this period were not favorable to the production of literature. For the greater part of the first century, after the planting of the colony, the energies of the people were almost entirely absorbed in the difficult work of establishing for themselves a permanent home. This task included not only the building of houses and the clearing of farms, but also the subduing of hostile and treacherous tribes of Indians. Under the stress of this toilsome and dangerous life, there could be but little leisure for the cultivation of literature as an art. The writings of the time were, for the most part, of a practical nature, designed either to preserve the history of the planting of the young nation, or to acquaint the people of the mother country with the wonders of the New World.

In addition to these unfavorable surroundings, it can hardly be claimed that the social conditions in Virginia, during the period under consideration, were likely to foster literary taste and literary production. The colonists, devoted to tobacco-planting and agriculture, settled on large plantations. There were no towns; and even Jamestown, the capital, had at the close of the century only a state-house, one church, and eighteen private dwellings. But little attention was paid to education. There is scarcely any mention of schools before 1688; and learning fell into such general neglect that Governor Spottswood in 1715 reproached the colonial assembly for having furnished two of its standing committees with chairmen who could not "spell English or write common sense." There was no printing-press in Virginia before 1681; and the printer was required to give bond not to print anything "until his Majesty's pleasure shall be known." For

nearly forty years of this period, from 1641 to 1677, Sir William Berkeley exerted his influence and power "in favor of the fine old conservative policy of keeping subjects ignorant in order to keep them submissive."¹ When questioned in 1670 about the condition of Virginia, he said: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."² Surely under these circumstances there was but little encouragement to literature.

Toward the close of the period before us, a growing interest in higher education resulted, in 1692, in the founding of the College of William and Mary, the oldest institution of learning in the South, and, after Harvard, the oldest in the United States. It received a cordial support not only in Virginia, but also in England. The lieutenant-governor headed the subscription list with a generous gift, and his example was followed by other prominent members of the colony. After the sum of twenty-five hundred pounds had thus been raised, the Rev. James Blair was sent to England to solicit a charter for the institution. This was readily granted; and as a further evidence of the royal favor, the quit-rents yet due in the colony, amounting to nearly two thousand pounds, were turned over to the college. For its further support, twenty thousand acres of land were set apart for its use, and a tax of a penny a pound was laid on all tobacco exported from Virginia and Maryland to other American

¹ Tyler, *History of American Literature*, p. 89.

² Campbell, *History of Virginia*, p. 273.

colonies. The college was located at Williamsburg; and the Rev. James Blair, who had been active in securing its establishment, was chosen as its first president. In the language of the charter, the college was founded "to the end that the Church of Virginia may be furnished with a seminary of ministers of the Gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that Christian faith may be propagated among the western Indians to the glory of God." The founding of this college, though without influence upon literature during the First Colonial Period, supplied in the next century a number of men who became illustrious in the political and literary history of their country.

New England. — Thirteen years after the founding of Jamestown, the Mayflower, with one hundred and two colonists, landed at Plymouth. They were Puritans, who for the sake of conscience first exiled themselves in Holland; and there considering that their nationality would finally be lost among the hospitable Dutch, they heroically resolved to migrate to the New World. They recognized the difficulties of the undertaking; but, as one of their number tells us, it was replied that "all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both enterprised and overcome with answerable courages."

Religion was a dominant factor in the character of the Puritans. In coming to America, they sought a refuge where, to use their own language, they "might glorify God, do more good to their country, better provide for their posterity, and live to be more refreshed by their labors." They were thorough-going Protestants; but in their adherence to Scripture they fell into Hebrew rigor.

They not only abstained from all forms of immorality, but they discountenanced innocent pleasures.

Notwithstanding the difficulties which attended their settlement, — the rigor of the climate, the hostility of the Indians, and the interference of foes abroad, — the Puritan colony rapidly grew in numbers and influence. The despotism of Charles I. and the persecution instigated by Archbishop Laud drove some of the best people of England to seek religious and political freedom in the colony of Massachusetts. By the year 1640 the colony numbered more than twenty thousand persons, distributed in about fifty towns and villages. Tyranny had made them friends of constitutional government.

In spite of superstition and religious intolerance, — evils belonging to the age, — New England was from the start the friend of popular intelligence and social progress. The printing-press was introduced in 1639; and though it was kept under close supervision, it was not allowed to remain entirely inactive. The Puritans deserve the credit of being the first community in Christendom to make ample provision for the instruction of the people. "In the laws establishing common schools, lies the secret of the success and character of New England. Every child, as it was born into the world, was lifted from the earth by the genius of the country, and, in the statutes of the land, received, as its birthright, a pledge of the public care for its morals and its mind."¹

In order that the Scriptures might be properly understood, and that learning might not be buried in the grave of their fathers, as the Act of the General Court stated, it was ordered in 1647 in all the Puritan colonies, "that

¹ Bancroft, *History of the United States*, Vol. I., p. 459.

every township, after the Lord hath increased them to fifty householders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read; and when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a grammar school; the masters thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university."

Harvard College, the oldest institution of learning in the United States, was founded in 1636. In that year the Massachusetts assembly "agreed to give four hundred pounds towards a school or college." This appropriation was equivalent to the colony tax for one year, and from this point of view would equal at the present time several millions of dollars. Newtown, which was afterwards changed to Cambridge in memory of the English university town, was chosen as the site of the new college. When John Harvard, who died shortly after the founding of the college, bequeathed to it his library and one-half of his estate, his name was associated with the institution, which was destined to exert an untold influence upon the literary history of our country.

We can now understand the literary pre-eminence of New England. From the first it was colonized by an earnest body of men of unusual intelligence. They lived together in towns, where perpetual contact sharpened their wits, and kept them in sympathy with subjects of common interest. Their attitude to religion led them to theological discussion. With some conception at least of the magnitude and far-reaching results of their undertaking, they minutely noted the facts of their experience, and sought to build a solid political structure. The tasks imposed upon them, as well as their novel and picturesque surroundings, stimulated their minds to the highest ac-

tivity. From their surroundings and character we would not expect artistic form. They hardly thought of literature as a fine art. But in their literature we find a manly strength and intense earnestness of purpose.

The seventeenth century produced a large number of writers in New England. Most of their works, however, are of interest now only to the antiquarian or specialist. No masterpiece of literature, such as the Puritan Milton produced in England, appeared to adorn American letters. The first book printed was the "Bay Psalm Book," a rude rendering of the Hebrew. As the preface informs us, "It hath been one part of our religious care and faithful endeavor to keep close to the original text. If, therefore, the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect, . . . we have respected rather a plain translation than to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase; and so have attended conscience rather than elegance, fidelity rather than poetry." After this introduction we are not much surprised to read the following version of Psalm XIX. :—

"The heavens doe declare
the majesty of God:
also the firmament shews forth
his handywork abroad.
Day speaks to day, knowledge
night hath to night declar'd.
There neither speach nor language is,
where their voyce is not heard.
Through all the earth their line
is gone forth, & unto
the utmost end of all the world,
their speeches reach also:
A Tabernacle hee
in them pitcht for the Sun,

Who Bridegroom like from's chamber goes
glad Giants-race to run.
From heavens utmost end,
his course and compassing;
to ends of it, & from the heat
thereof is hid nothing."

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH.

DURING the early colonial period, the first writer in time, as, perhaps, in prominence, is Captain John Smith of Virginia. His personal history, which he has himself related in full, reads like a romance. Indeed, so interesting and remarkable are the incidents of his life, as given in his several volumes, that it is impossible to escape the suspicion that he has freely supplemented and embellished the facts from the resources of his ample imagination.

Yet, after all due abatement is made, the fact remains incontestable, that his career presented striking vicissitudes of fortune, and that in the midst of trials and dangers he showed himself fertile in resources, and dauntless in courage. In more than one emergency, the colony at Jamestown owed its preservation to his sagacity and courage; and though from the beginning his superior abilities made him an object of envy, he had the magnanimity to extinguish resentment, and the unselfishness to labor for the good of his enemies.

John Smith was born in Lincolnshire, England, in 1580, the son of a well-to-do farmer. He received a moderate education in the schools of Alford and Louth. His parents died when he was a lad of fifteen; and though they left him a comfortable fortune, he was not content quietly to enjoy it. His youthful heart was set on adventures abroad; and only his father's death prevented his running away from home and going to sea. He was afterwards bound as an apprentice to Thomas Sendall, a prominent merchant of Lynn; but his restless disposition could not be satisfied with the unromantic duties of a counting-house, and hence he made his escape to give himself to a life of travel and adventure.



These are the Lines that shew thy Face but those .
 That shew thy Grace and Glory, brighter bee
 Thy Faire-Discoveries and Fowle - Overthrowes
 Of Salvages, much Civilliz'd by thee
 Best shew thy Spirit and to it Glory Wynn
 So, thou art Brasse without - but Golde within .

The next few years witnessed an astonishing amount of roving adventure. We find him in turn in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and everywhere encountering dangers and making marvellous escapes. He read military science, and disciplined himself to the use of arms. He served under Henry IV. of France, and then assisted the Dutch in their struggle against Philip II. of Spain. Afterwards, to use his own words, "He was desirous to see more of the world, and try his fortune against the Turks, both lamenting and repenting to have seen so many Christians slaughter one another."

Taking ship at Marseilles with a company of pilgrims going to Rome, he was angrily reproached for his Protestant heresy; and when a storm was encountered, his violent and superstitious fellow-travellers cast him, like another Jonah, into the sea. His good fortune did not desert him in this emergency. He succeeded in reaching a small, uninhabited island, from which he was shortly rescued and taken to Egypt. After other vicissitudes, including the capture of a rich Venetian argosy, he finally reached Vienna, and enlisted under the Emperor Rudolph II. against the Turks.

In the campaigns that followed, he won the confidence of his commanders. At Regal, in Transylvania, he distinguished himself in the presence of two armies by slaying in succession, in single combat, three Turkish champions. For this deed of prowess he received a patent of nobility, and a pension of three hundred ducats a year. Afterwards he had the misfortune to be wounded in battle, and was captured by the Turks. Having been sold as a slave, he was taken to Constantinople, where he touched the heart of his mistress by relating to her, like another Othello, the whole story of his adventures. Subsequently, after spending some time in Tartary, he made his escape through Russia, and at length returned to England in 1604. But his spirit of adventure was not yet satiated, and he at once threw himself into the schemes of colonization that were then engaging attention. He was one of the founders of the London Company.

The landing of the colony at Jamestown and their early difficulties and trials have already been spoken of. In the language of Smith, "There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this new discovered Virginia. We watched every three nights, lying on the bare cold ground, what weather soever came, and warded all the next day, which brought our men to be most feeble wretches. Our food was but a small can of barley sodden in water to five men a day. Our drink, cold water taken out of the river, which was, at a flood, very salt, at a low tide, full of slime and filth, which was the destruction of many of our men." In less than six months, more than one-half of the colony had perished.

Smith encouraged the disheartened colonists, and wisely directed their labors, always bearing the heaviest part himself. Houses were built, and the land was tilled; and as often as supplies of food were needed, he succeeded in begging or bullying the Indians into furnishing what was needed. As opportunity presented itself, he diligently explored the country. It was on an expedition of discovery up the Chickahominy that he fell into the hands of Powhatan; and in spite of his fertility in resources, he escaped death only through the well-known intercession and protection of the noble-minded Pocahontas.

In recent years the truth of this story has been questioned; but an examination of the evidence hardly warrants us in pronouncing "the Pocahontas myth demolished." Until a stronger array of facts can be adduced, it must still stand as the most beautiful and most romantic incident connected with the founding of the American colonies.

While Smith had the direction of the colony as president, it prospered. The Indians were kept in subjection, and the colonists were wisely directed in their labors. But in 1609 a change took place. Five hundred new colonists arrived, and refused to acknowledge his authority. They robbed the Indians, and plotted the murder of Smith. While dangers were thus gathering, an accident changed the course of events. As

Smith lay sleeping in his boat, the powder bag at his side exploded, and frightfully burned his body. In his agony he leaped overboard, and narrowly escaped drowning. In his disabled condition and need of medical aid, he returned to England in October, 1609, and never visited Virginia again. His absence was sorely felt. The colonists soon fell into great disorder and distress. "The starving time" came on; and in five months death reduced the number of colonists from four hundred and ninety to sixty.

Two of the survivors of "the starving time" have left a noble estimate of the character of Smith: "What shall I say? but thus we lost him that in all his proceedings made justice his first guide and experience his second; ever hating baseness, sloth, pride, and indignity more than any dangers; that never allowed more for himself than his soldiers with him; that upon no danger would send them where he would not lead them himself; that would never see us want what he either had, or could by any means get us; that would rather want than borrow, or starve and not pay; that loved actions more than words, and hated cozenage and falsehood more than death; whose adventures were our lives, and whose loss our death."

The next few years of his life, from 1610 to 1617, Smith spent in voyages to that section of our country which he named New England. While fishing for cod and bartering for furs, his principal object was to explore the coast, with a view to establish a settlement. He explored and mapped the country from the Penobscot to Cape Cod. His explorations in this region earned for him the title of "Admiral of New England." On his last expedition he was captured by a French pirate, and carried prisoner to Rochelle. But soon effecting his escape, he made his way back to England, which he seems never to have left again. The last years of his life were devoted to authorship. Among his numerous works may be mentioned the following: "A True Relation" (1608); "A Description of New England" (1616); "The General History

of Virginia " (1624) ; and "The True Travels " (1630). He died June 21, 1631, and was buried in St. Sepulchre's Church, London.

He has left us an admirable summary of his remarkable life : " Having been a slave to the Turks ; prisoner among the most barbarous savages ; after my deliverance commonly discovering and ranging those large rivers and unknown nations with such a handful of ignorant companions that the wiser sort often gave me up for lost ; always in mutinies, wants, and miseries ; blown up with gunpowder ; a long time a prisoner among the French pirates, from whom escaping in a little boat by myself. . . . And many a score of the worst winter months have I lived in the fields ; yet to have lived thirty-seven years in the midst of wars, pestilences, and famine, by which many a hundred thousand have died about me, and scarce five living of them that went first with me to Virginia, and yet to see the fruits of my labors thus well begin to prosper (though I have but my labor for my pains), have I not much reason, both privately and publicly, to acknowledge it, and give God thanks ? "

After all necessary abatement is made in the account he has given of his life, it is apparent that he was no ordinary man. He was great in word and deed. His voluminous writings are characterized by clearness, force, and dramatic energy. His intellect was cast in the large mould of the era to which he belonged. He was a man of broad views. As a leader he displayed courage and executive ability ; and few American explorers have shown the same indomitable energy. Though restless, ambitious, and vain, he was noble in aim and generous in disposition. During the first quarter of the seventeenth century " he did more than any other Englishman to make an American nation and an American literature possible."



COTTON MATHER.

COTTON MATHER.

AMONG the numerous writers of the first colonial era in New England, Cotton Mather stands as a kind of literary behemoth. In literary productiveness, though not in weighty character, he appears in the literature of the time with something of the hugeness that afterwards distinguished Samuel Johnson in England. His published writings reach the astonishing number of three hundred and eighty-three: and while many of them, it is true, are only pamphlets, there are also among them bulky volumes.

He was the third of a line of distinguished ancestors, the relative standing of whom is given in an old epitaph:—

“ Under this stone lies Richard Mather,
Who had a son greater than his father,
And eke a grandson greater than either.”

This grandson was of course Cotton Mather, who was born Feb. 12, 1663, in Boston. On the side of his mother, who was a daughter of the celebrated pulpit-orator John Cotton, he likewise inherited talents of no usual order. After receiving his preparatory training in the free school of Boston, he entered Harvard College, at the age of twelve years, with superior attainments. During his collegiate course he was distinguished for his ability and scholarship; and at the time of his graduation, the president of the college, with a reference to his double line of illustrious ancestors, said in a Latin oration: “I trust that in this youth Cotton and Mather will be united and flourish again.”

He may be regarded as a typical product of the Puritan culture of his time; and with this fact in mind, his life becomes

doubly interesting. He possessed a deeply religious nature, which asserted itself strongly even in his youth, and drove him to continual introspection. Troubled with doubts and fears about his salvation, he became serious in manner, and spent much time in prayer and fasting. At the same time he was active in doing good, instructing his brothers and sisters at home, and fearlessly reproofing his companions for profanity or immorality.

After leaving college, Cotton Mather spent several years in teaching. But inheriting two great ecclesiastical names, it was but natural for him to think of the ministry. Unfortunately, he was embarrassed by a strongly marked impediment of speech; but upon the advice of a friend, accustoming himself to "dilated deliberation" in public speaking, he succeeded in overcoming this difficulty. He preached his first sermon at the age of seventeen, and a few months afterwards was called to North Church, the leading congregation in Boston, as associate of his father. His preaching was well received—a fact about which, perhaps, he was unduly concerned. With his habit of dwelling upon his inward states of mind, he noted in his Diary (to which we are much indebted for an insight into his subjective life) a tendency to sinful pride, which he endeavored to suppress by the doubtful expedient of calling himself opprobrious names.

His method of sermonizing and preaching is well worth noting. It was the age of heroic sermons, the length of which was counted, not by minutes, but by hours. When he was at a loss for a text, "he would make a prayer to the Holy Spirit of Christ, as well to find a text for him as to handle it." But he was far from a lazy reliance upon divine aid. He carefully examined his text in the original language, and consulted the commentaries upon it. He very properly chose his subjects, not with a view to display his abilities, but to edify his hearers. Unlike his father, who laboriously committed his sermons to memory, he made use of extended notes, and thus gained both the finish of studied discourse, and the fervor of extemporaneous speaking.

The question of marriage was suggested, not by the drawing of a tender, irresistible passion, but by calm, rational considerations of utility. Accordingly, there was nothing rashly precipitate in his courtship; "he first looked up to heaven for direction, and then asked counsel of his friends." The person fixed upon at last as his future companion was the daughter of Colonel Philips of Charlestown, to whom he was shortly afterwards married. "She was a comely, ingenious woman, and an agreeable consort." This union, as also his second marriage, was a happy one; but it is a suggestive fact that his third wife is referred to in his Diary only in Latin. She made his life wretched; and it is still uncertain whether she was the victim of insanity or of a demoniac ill-temper.

From childhood, as is the case with most persons of extraordinary gifts, he was conscious of his superior ability, and expected and labored to be a great man. He assiduously employed every moment of time, keeping up a perpetual tension of exertion. Over the door of his library he wrote in capital letters the suggestive legend, "BE SHORT." His daily life was governed by a mechanical routine; yet, after the Puritanic fashion, he upbraided himself with slothfulness.

He mastered not only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which was expected of every scholar of the time, but also Spanish, French, and one of the Indian tongues, in most of which he published books. He had the marvellous power, possessed by Spurgeon, Gladstone, and Macaulay, of mastering the contents of a book with almost incredible rapidity. According to the testimony of his son, "He would ride post through an author." He had the largest library in New England; and its contents were so at command, that "he seemed to have an inexpressible source of divine flame and vigor." His literary activity was extraordinary. In a single year, besides keeping twenty fasts and discharging all the duties of a laborious pastorate, he published fourteen books. It is not strange that one of his contemporaries, in the presence of this extraordinary activity, should exclaim: —

"Is the blest Mather necromancer turned?"

Among his numerous works, there is one that stands with monumental pre-eminence ; it is the “ *Magnalia Christi Americana* ; or, ‘The Ecclesiastical History of New England,’ from its first planting in the year 1620 to the year of our Lord 1698. It may justly be regarded as the most important book produced in America during the seventeenth century. Its scope will appear from the topics treated of in its seven books. The first book gives an account of the settlement of New England ; the second contains “ the lives of the governors and the names of the magistrates that have been shields unto the churches of New England ; ” the third recounts “ the lives of sixty famous divines, by whose ministry the churches of New England have been planted and continued ; ” the fourth is devoted to the history of Harvard College, and of “ some eminent persons therein educated ; ” the fifth describes “ the faith and order of the churches ; ” the sixth speaks of “ many illustrious discoveries and demonstrations of the divine providence in remarkable mercies and judgments ” — the book in which, it is said, his soul most delighted ; and the seventh narrates “ the afflictive disturbances which the churches of New England have suffered from their various adversaries,” namely, impostors, Quakers, Separatists, Indians, and the Devil.

The work is a treasure-house of information. No historian was ever better equipped for his work. Besides access to a multitude of original documents that have since perished, he was acquainted with many of the leading men of New England, and had himself been identified with various important political and ecclesiastical interests. Yet the manner in which he discharged the functions of historian is not altogether satisfactory. Perhaps he was too near the events to be strictly impartial. His personal feelings — his friendships or his animosities — were allowed, perhaps unconsciously, to color his statements ; and in regard to his facts, he is open to the very serious charge of being careless and inaccurate. While his work is indispensable for a thorough understanding of New England history, it is always safe to have his statement of important facts corroborated by collateral testimony.

Notwithstanding his laborious application to reading and study, Cotton Mather was interested in a surprising number of philanthropic undertakings. He wrote a book entitled "*Bonifacius, an Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed, with Proposals of Unexceptionable Methods to do Good in the World,*" — a work that places philanthropy upon a business basis, and anticipates many of the benevolent associations of the present day. Of this book Benjamin Franklin says that it "perhaps gave me a turn of thinking, that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life."¹ Cotton Mather sought to check the vice of drunkenness, and was perhaps our first temperance reformer. Though he purchased a slave (for slavery then existed in New England), he interested himself in the education of negroes, and at his own expense established a school for their instruction. He wrote a work on the Christianizing of the negroes, and noted in his Diary: "My design is, not only to lodge a copy in every family in New England, that has a negro in it, but also to send numbers of them into the Indies." He took an interest in foreign missions, and proposed to send Bibles and Psalters among the nations.

The darkest feature in the life of Cotton Mather — a feature which avenging critics have by no means lost sight of — is his connection with the witchcraft tragedy. In common with people of every class in his day, he believed in the reality of witchcraft. In 1685, the year he was ordained, he published a work entitled "*Memorable Providences relating to Witchcraft,*" which had the misfortune of being quoted as an authority in connection with the Salem horrors. Looking upon himself as specially set for the defence of Zion, he gave himself with Old Testament zeal to the extermination of what he believed a work of the Devil.

Over against this dreadful delusion should be placed his heroic conduct in advocating vaccination at a time when it was considered a dangerous and impious innovation. When the

¹ Autobiography, chap. i.

smallpox made its appearance in Boston, the physicians, with one honorable exception, were opposed to the newly advocated system of vaccination on the general principle, strange to say, that "it was presumptuous in man to inflict disease on man, that being the prerogative of the Most High." The matter was discussed with great bitterness of feeling; and the mass of the people, as well as the civil authorities, were against the new treatment. But Cotton Mather had been convinced of the efficacy of vaccination; and accordingly, though he knew it would cost him his popularity, and perhaps expose him to personal violence, he resolutely faced the popular clamor, and boldly vindicated the truth. It was only after the lapse of considerable time that he had the satisfaction of seeing the popular prejudice give way.

It was a great disappointment to Cotton Mather that he was never chosen president of Harvard College, a position to which he ardently, though as he thought unselfishly, aspired. On two occasions, when he confidently expected election, he was humiliated by seeing less learned men chosen for the place. He attributed his defeat to the influence of his enemies, and never for a moment suspected the real cause, which was a distrust, perhaps too well founded, of his prudence and judgment.

He died Feb. 13, 1728. Though not a man of great original genius, his mind was massive and strong. He had the quality which some have held to be the essential thing in genius, — the power of indomitable and systematic industry. His spiritual life, while influenced by Puritanic ideals, was profound; and unbelief has sometimes mocked at experiences which it lacked the capacity to understand. He was followed to the grave by an immense procession, including all the high officers of the Province; and the general feeling was that a great man had fallen, the weight of whose life, in spite of imperfections, had been on the side of righteousness.

SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. JONATHAN EDWARDS.

OTHER WRITERS.

DAVID BRAINERD (1718-1747). Missionary to the Indians. A man of strong mental powers, fervent zeal, and extensive knowledge. "Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos" and "Divine Grace Displayed" are made up of his missionary journals.

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON (1723-1790). Jurist, legislator, and poet. For a time governor of New Jersey. Author of the poem "Philosophic Solitude."

MATHER BYLES (1706-1788). Preacher, poet, and wit. He published a volume of poems in 1736.

WILLIAM BYRD (1674-1744). Founder of the cities of Richmond and Petersburg. Author of the "History of the Dividing Line" between Virginia and North Carolina, — "one of the most delightful of the literary legacies of the colonial age."

JAMES BLAIR (1656-1743). Founder of William and Mary College. Author of "The Present State of Virginia and the College," and "Our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount."

WILLIAM STITH (1689-1755). President of William and Mary College, and author of the "History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia," — "in accuracy of detail not exceeded by any American historical work."

SAMUEL SEWALL (1652-1730). A graduate of Harvard, and chief-justice of Massachusetts in 1718. Among his works are "Answer to Queries Respecting America," and especially his "Diary," which presents an interesting and graphic account of Puritan life in the seventeenth century.

II.

SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD.

(1689-1763.)

THE early history of America has a peculiar interest for those who perceive the relation of its events to the subsequent development of the country. The growth of a great nation can be clearly traced step by step. Great interests were involved in the success or failure of apparently small enterprises. The life of a nation — principles upon which the welfare of future millions depended — was often at stake in some obscure and apparently insignificant struggle.

The history of this period, with its small exploring parties, savage massacres, and petty military campaigns, seems at first sight to be a confused mass of disconnected events. But in the life of nations, as of individuals, "there is a destiny that shapes our ends;" and throughout all the maze of injustice, tyranny, and bloodshed, it is now possible to discern the divine purpose. God was keeping watch by the cradle of a great people.

With the beginning of the eighteenth century, America entered upon a new stage of progress. All the thirteen colonies, except Georgia, had been established. The toil and dangers of early settlement had been overcome. The colonies had largely increased in population; and agriculture, manufacture, and commerce had made a substantial

beginning. By the close of the period the population of the colonies had reached more than a million and a half. In 1738 forty-one topsail vessels, averaging a hundred and fifty tons, were built in Boston.

The educational interests of the colonies kept pace with their material advancement. In New England there was not an adult, born in this country, who could not read and write. During this period seven colleges — Yale, Princeton, King's (now Columbia), Brown, Queen's (afterwards Rutgers), Dartmouth, and Hampden-Sidney — were founded. In 1704 the *News-Letter*, the first periodical of the New World, was published in Boston; and before the close of the French and Indian War in 1763, ten other newspapers had made their appearance in various colonies. The press at last became free. Official censorship received its death-blow in New York in 1734, when Andrew Hamilton, an aged lawyer of Philadelphia, addressed the jury in behalf of an imprisoned printer: "The question before you is not the cause of a poor printer, nor of New York alone; it is the best cause — the cause of liberty. Every man who prefers freedom to a life of slavery will bless and honor you as men who, by an impartial verdict, lay a noble foundation for securing to ourselves, our posterity, and our neighbors, that to which nature and the honor of our country have given us a right — the liberty of opposing arbitrary power by speaking and writing truth."

It is not strange that the future greatness of America began to dawn upon the minds of men. The world had never before witnessed such a rapid increase of prosperity and power. In contemplating the rising glory of America, an Italian poet sang that the spirit of ancient Rome, im-

mortal and undecayed, was spreading towards the New World. Bishop Berkeley, in prophetic vision, foretold a "golden age," when the arts would flourish, and when a race of "wisest heads and noblest hearts" would be born : —

“ Not such as Europe breeds in her decay
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.”

In England it was believed that the colonial leaders were secretly meditating and planning independence. Though this was undoubtedly a mistake, yet a growing national feeling is clearly discernible in the utterances and relations of the colonies. It could not well be otherwise in the presence of their increasing prosperity and promising future, and of the strengthening ties that bound them together. The colonists were chiefly of Teutonic origin. They came to this country as voluntary exiles in order to escape religious or political oppression, and were thus united by the sympathy of suffering and sacrifice. For the most part they used the English language; and though there were Puritans, Episcopalians, Quakers, Huguenots, and Presbyterians, they were nearly all warm adherents of Protestantism. Yet, in spite of these strong affinities, the colonies were for a long time jealous and distrustful of one another. Their interests were not regarded as common; and without the pressure of external circumstances they would probably have remained a long time separated.

This external pressure, which was necessary to bring the colonies into closer relationship, was not lacking. It came from two opposite sources. In the first place, the policy of England was admirably adapted to develop a spirit of freedom, and to unite the colonies in a common resistance of oppression. At that time it was the prevailing view abroad that the colonies existed solely for the benefit of the mother country. Consequently, the measures of government were adopted, not for the welfare of the colonies, but for the profit of England. This unjust policy naturally provoked opposition in a people who had abandoned home and country for the sake of freedom.

The other influence impelling the colonies to confederation came from the ambitious schemes of France. As will have been noticed, the English colonies extended along the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Florida. Though their territory theoretically extended across the continent, their settlements did not reach inland more than a hundred miles. To prevent the further extension of the English colonies, the French formed the magnificent plan of occupying the interior of the continent, and thus of confining their enemies to a narrow belt on the Atlantic coast. They already had possession of Canada; and ascending the St. Lawrence, they established forts and trading-posts along the southern shores of the Great Lakes, and thence down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Having discovered the Mississippi, they laid claim to all the territory drained by its waters; that is to say, to the magnificent empire lying between the Alleghany and the Rocky Mountains. "If the French," wrote the governor of New York in 1687, "have all that they pretend to have discovered in these parts, the king of England will not

have a hundred miles from the sea anywhere." A conflict between the English and the French thus became inevitable; and the stake involved was nothing less than the life of the English colonies, and the possession of the American continent. In the presence of this conflict, the instinct of self-preservation drew the colonies into closer sympathy and union.

The struggle between England and France for the possession of America — a struggle that lasted with intermissions for more than seventy years — began in 1689, the dividing-point between the two colonial periods. First came King William's War, when Louis XIV. espoused the cause of James II., and Count Frontenac was sent to be governor of Canada, with orders to conquer New York. Then followed in quick succession Queen Anne's War, or the War of the Spanish Succession; King George's War, or the War of the Austrian Succession; and lastly, the Seven Years' War, or the French and Indian War. These various wars, as their names generally indicate, grew out of conflicting European interests; but since England and France, as hostile nations, were invariably opposed to each other, their colonies in America were always drawn into the conflict. The course of these successive wars, with their varying fortunes and sickening massacres, cannot here be followed in detail. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763 the conflict in America finally came to an end by the cession of Canada and the Mississippi Valley to England. At one blow the French possessions in America and French schemes for a great western empire were forever swept away.

Had the issue of this protracted struggle been in favor of France, the course of American history and of Ameri-

can literature would have been very different. French colonization in America represented three distinct tendencies, from all of which the English colonists had broken away. First of all, in direct antagonism against popular government, Louis XIV. stood for despotism. His attitude toward France is indicated in his famous saying, "*L'État c'est moi.*" In the second place, the colonization undertaken by the French carried with it the feudal system. Instead of the political and social equality recognized and encouraged in the English colonies, it meant the class system of nobles and inferiors. In the third place, the success of the French meant the establishment of a wholly different form of belief and worship. The most enterprising and devoted of the French explorers were Jesuits, whose self-sacrificing work among the Indians sometimes reached the highest point of heroism. In short, if the French schemes had been successful, the result would have been, as was contemplated, a new mediæval France, which in its development, having possession of the largest and fairest part of the continent, would have driven the English colonies into the Atlantic Ocean.

The first step towards a general union of the American colonies was taken in 1684. The French had encroached upon the territory of the Five Nations in New York; and in preparation for the inevitable conflict, the Indians desired to form a treaty of peace with the English. Accordingly, a convention composed of delegates from Virginia, Maryland, New York, and Massachusetts, met at Albany. For the first time, the northern and the southern colonies came together to consider the common welfare. The conference resulted in a treaty; and the Mohawk chief at its conclusion spoke better than he knew when he said: "We

now plant a tree whose top will reach the sun, and its branches spread far abroad, so that it shall be seen afar off, and we shall shelter ourselves under it, and live in peace without molestation."

The necessity of a closer general union gradually became more apparent. In 1698 William Penn proposed a plan of federation. In 1754 the Convention of Albany, composed of representatives from six of the colonies, resolved that a union ought to be formed, and accordingly recommended the adoption of a constitution, the outlines of which had been drawn up by Franklin. But this constitution was disapproved in England, because it allowed too much freedom to the colonies ; and it was rejected by the colonies, because it gave too much authority to England. Thus, though the sentiment of union was steadily growing, it did not reach full practical realization. That consummation, which was to mark the birth of the American nation, was reserved for the following period.

The changed conditions of American life during this period exerted a salutary influence upon literature. While the conditions were far from being ideal, they marked a considerable advance upon those of the earlier period, and thus gave a broader scope and better form to literary productions. The hard and unceasing struggle for existence characteristic of the greater part of the first colonial period had given place to comparative ease and comfort. While there was but little accumulation of wealth, there were, especially in the older colonies, many comfortable homes, in which books and leisure supplied the opportunity for culture. Several considerable cities — Boston, New York, and Philadelphia — served in some degree as literary centres. The growing number of schools added to

the popular intelligence. The newspapers furnished topics for general thought and discussion, while the closer relations and larger interests of the colonies gave a wider horizon to the intellectual life of the people.

As the writers of this second colonial period were American by birth and education, their works assume a more original and more distinctive character. The writings of this period, whether in philosophy, theology, history, politics, or poetry, possessed, in addition to a higher artistic excellence, a perceptible American flavor. Not many authors attained to distinction; but among the shoal of insignificant writers, there were two leviathans, — Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards, — who became eminent not only in the colonies, but also in England and on the Continent.



Ben^a. Franklin

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

No other American, excepting only the Father of his Country, is more interesting to people of every class than Benjamin Franklin. His popularity has been extraordinary. Since his death, a little more than a hundred years ago, no decade has passed without the publication of a biography or a new edition of his works. His "Autobiography," the most popular historical work of America, possesses a perennial interest. It is replete not only with interesting incident, but also with genial humor and profound practical wisdom.

The facts of his life are so well known that it is not necessary to dwell upon them. He was born in Boston, Jan. 17, 1706 — the youngest of an old-fashioned family of ten children. From his father, who was a candlemaker and soap-boiler, he inherited not only a strong physical constitution, but his "solid judgment in prudential matters." He attended the free grammar schools of Boston about a year, and gave promise of becoming a good scholar; but owing to the straitened circumstances of his father, he was taken away in order to cut wicks, mould candles, and run errands — all which he heartily disliked.

From childhood he was passionately fond of reading, and he used the little money that came into his hands to buy books. His first purchase was Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which after being read and re-read was sold to buy Burton's "Historical Collections" — a class of writings of which he was specially fond. Among the books of his early reading were Plutarch's "Lives" and Mather's "Essay to do Good," which he specially mentions as exerting a salutary influence upon his mind and character. He did not escape the common temptation of book-

ish youths to attempt poetry, and wrote two ballads which, in spite of a flattering success at the time, he afterwards characterized, and no doubt justly, as "wretched stuff." From the danger of becoming a sorry poet he was timely rescued by his father, who with Philistine coldness called his attention to the fact that "verse-makers were generally beggars."

But his literary instincts were not to be quenched; and though he gave up poetry, he cultivated prose with great ardor. To increase his fluency, he was accustomed to engage in discussion with another literary lad by the name of Collins; but he had the good sense to escape the disputatious habit which this practice is in danger of developing, and which wise people, he tells us, seldom fall into. He modelled his style after Addison's *Spectator*, which was then a novelty in the colonies. But he had too much force of mind and character to become a mere imitator; and through a laborious apprenticeship he developed a style that is admirable for its simplicity, clearness, and force.

He was early encouraged in his literary efforts. At the age of twelve he had been apprenticed to his brother James to learn the printing business. Here he worked on the *New England Courant*, the second newspaper that appeared in America. Some of the contributors occasionally met in the office to discuss the little essays that had appeared in the paper. Having caught the mania for appearing in print, and fearing to have his productions rejected if the authorship were known, he disguised his hand, wrote an anonymous paper, and slipped it at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found next morning, and discussed by the little company that called in as usual. "They read it," he says, "commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity." It is not strange that he continued his anonymous communications for some time.

The apprenticeship, though not till he had mastered the

printer's trade, came to an abrupt termination. Long dissatisfied with the ill-treatment received from his brother, who was a high-tempered, overbearing man, he at last ran away at the age of seventeen. He landed first at New York; and failing to find employment there, he continued his journey to Philadelphia. The figure he cut that first Sunday morning as he walked the streets with a roll under each arm, and excited the laughter of the young lady he afterwards married, is familiar to every one. He found employment, and attracted the notice of Governor Keith, who after a time persuaded him to go to England for a printer's outfit.

On reaching England, he found that he had been duped by Keith, who belonged to that class of men lavish in promises but miserly in help. The letter of credit which the governor had promised was wanting. In his embarrassment, Franklin was advised by a prudent business man whom he had met on the vessel, to seek employment at his trade. "Among the printers here," his friend argued, "you will improve yourself, and when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage." This advice he wisely followed, and successively worked in two large printing-houses, where he used his eyes to good advantage. He practised his usual industry and temperance, and commanded the respect of his associates.

After spending eighteen months in London, where his life morally was far from being a model, he received an advantageous offer to return to Philadelphia and enter a store as clerk. After a promising beginning, this arrangement was in a few months brought to an end by the merchant's death. Franklin then returned to printing, and engaged with Keimer, for whom he had worked before going to England. The deficiencies of the printing-office were supplied by Franklin's ingenuity; for he cast type, prepared engravings, made ink, was "warehouse man, and, in short, quite a *factotum*." But as he taught the other workmen of the office, among whom were "a wild Irishman" and "an Oxford scholar," his services became less necessary; and on the first opportunity his employer provoked a

quarrel, and brought the engagement to an end. This led to Franklin's setting up for himself; and he now entered upon a career of uninterrupted prosperity, which was to continue for more than sixty years.

But in the midst of his business projects, he did not neglect his literary culture. He formed a club, which was called the *Junto*, and to which most of his friends of literary taste belonged. Its object was mutual improvement by means of essays and discussions. For greater convenience of reference, a library was formed, each member of the club loaning such books as he could spare. Afterwards Franklin started a subscription library, the first of its kind in America. The club continued for nearly forty years, and was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics in the province.

Beyond most men, Franklin had the power of self-control. He was thus able from early manhood to bring his conduct under the direction of principles which he had deliberately adopted in the light of reason. When he was told by a Quaker friend that he was generally thought to be proud, and when he was satisfied of the fact by the evidence adduced (it would have been hard to convince most men), he at once added humility to the list of virtues in which he was to exercise himself; and he succeeded in acquiring at least its outward expression. He gave up his dogmatic manner in conversation and argument; and in place of positive assertion, he formed the habit of introducing his opinions with modest diffidence. He recognized the truth of Pope's lines:—

“Men must be taught, as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.”

He accustomed himself to introduce his statements with “I conceive,” “I apprehend,” “It appears to me at present,” and other similar expressions. “And this mode,” he says, “which I at first put on with some violence to natural inclination, became at length easy, and so habitual to me, that perhaps

for the last fifty years no one has ever heard a dogmatical expression escape me. And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow citizens, when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old; and so much influence in public councils, when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my point." All which is delightfully frank, and takes us, as it were, behind the scenes.

To return to his printing business, he pushed it with great shrewdness and energy, and with his usual frankness he lets us into what he considers the secret of his success. "In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid the appearances to the contrary. I dressed plain, and was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, was private, and gave no scandal; and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores, through the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on prosperously."

As opportunity afforded, he judiciously increased his business, publishing a newspaper which became the most influential in the colonies, and opening a stationer's shop. He regarded his newspaper as a means of benefiting the public; and besides reprinting extracts from the *Spectator*, he frequently contributed little essays of his own. Among these he mentions "a Socratic dialogue, tending to prove that, whatever might be his parts and abilities, a vicious man could not properly be called a man of sense."

In 1732 he began the publication of an Almanac under the

name of Richard Saunders ; it was continued about twenty-five years, and was commonly called "Poor Richard's Almanac." It had an annual sale of about ten thousand copies, and proved quite a profitable undertaking. Considering it a useful means of conveying instruction to the common people, he filled every available corner "with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue ; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.*" These proverbs, very few of which were original, represent the practical wisdom of many nations and ages. In 1758 he brought the principal ones together in the form of a connected discourse, which is supposed to be delivered by a wise old man to the crowd attending an auction. "The piece," to give Franklin's account of it, "being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the American continent, reprinted in Britain on a large sheet of paper, to be stuck up in houses ; two translations were made of it in France, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money, which was observable for several years after its publication."

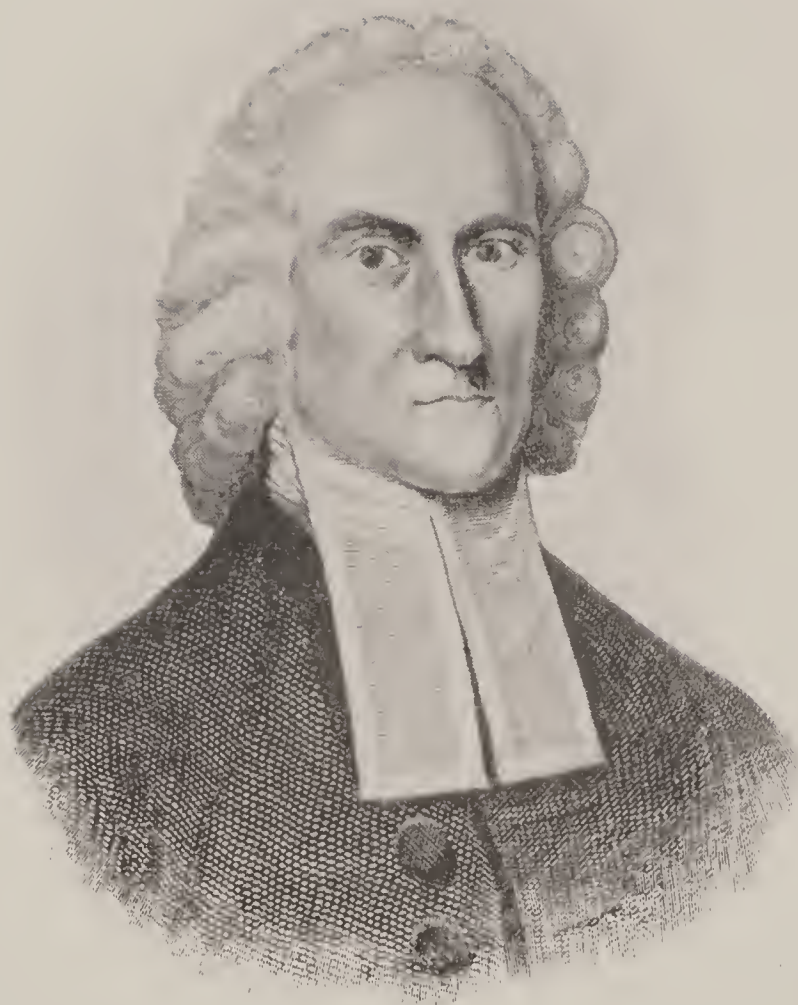
By this time Franklin had become a prominent person in the community ; and his business success having put him in easier circumstances, he was able to turn his attention more fully to public affairs. In 1736 he was chosen clerk of the General Assembly, and the following year he was appointed postmaster at Philadelphia. As a public-spirited citizen he sought to improve the condition of the city, and to this end he organized a regular police force, supported by taxation, and a voluntary fire company. When the Quaker Assembly refused to pass a militia law during the war of the Spanish Succession, he strongly set forth the defenceless condition of the province,

and proposed the organization of a voluntary body of troops. The success of the enterprise was astonishing. At a public meeting in Philadelphia, the enrolment numbered more than five hundred in a single evening; and including the enlistment in the country, the number of volunteers at length reached ten thousand men, who formed themselves into companies and regiments, chose officers, and provided themselves with arms.

Labors and honors were now heaped upon him. He was appointed postmaster-general for America. Both Harvard and Yale honored him with the master's degree. He was the chief promoter in establishing an academy which afterwards became the University of Pennsylvania. In his educational views he was progressive beyond his time. He deserves a place among educational reformers. While building up his business, he had also gained a reading knowledge of French, Italian, and Spanish. From these he passed to Latin, for which he found the "preceding languages had greatly smoothed the way." Thus he was led by experience to recognize the truth of the maxim of Comenius, that "the nearer should precede the more remote." Hence he argued, as the philosopher Locke had done before him, that ancient languages should be approached through the study of the modern languages.

In 1754 he was appointed a delegate to the Albany convention to consult with the Six Nations in regard to the common defence of the country against the French. It was then that he proposed "a plan for the union of all the colonies under one government, so far as might be necessary for defence and other important general purposes." It always remained his opinion that the adoption of this plan of union would have averted or certainly delayed the conflict with the mother country. "The colonies so united," he wrote in his old age, "would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; of course the subsequent pretext for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided. But such

The two or three last years of his life were a fitting close to his extraordinary career. Though suffering at times much physical pain, he lived in comfortable retirement, in the midst of his grandchildren and the company of friends. He retained his faculties to the last; and that genial humor, which characterized his life, never deserted him. His manners were easy and obliging; and his large benevolence diffused about him an atmosphere of unrestrained freedom and satisfaction. He looked forward to his approaching end with philosophic composure. "Death I shall submit to," he said, "with the less regret as, having seen during a long life a good deal of this world, I feel a growing curiosity to be acquainted with some other; and can cheerfully, with filial confidence, resign my spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of mankind who has so graciously protected and prospered me from my birth to the present hour." The end came the 17th of April, 1790, at the age of eighty-four years; and his body, followed by an immense throng of people, was laid to rest by that of his wife in the yard of Christ Church.



JONATHAN EDWARDS.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

IN considering a man's life, we should take into consideration its historic environment. We should judge it, not by the standards of our day, but by the standards then prevailing. Only for moral obliquity must there be small allowance; for whatever may be the laxity of the times, every man has in his breast a monitor against vice.

If we study Jonathan Edwards with proper sympathy, we must pronounce his life a great life. Though his character was colored by Puritan austerity, and his religious experience involved what many believe to have been morbid emotions, there is no questioning the fact of his masterful intellect and his stainless integrity. He certainly was not, what a ferocious critic has styled him, a theological "monomaniac." There is much less reason to dissent from the judgment of another reviewer who says of him: "Remarkable for the beauty of his face and person, lordly in the easy sweep and grasp of his intellect, wonderful in his purity of soul and in his simple devotion to the truth, the world has seldom seen in finer combination all the great qualities of a godlike manhood."¹

Jonathan Edwards, who was born at East Windsor, Conn., Oct. 5, 1703, was of excellent Puritan stock. His father, the Rev. Timothy Edwards, was for sixty-four years the honored pastor of the Congregational church of East Windsor; and his mother was the daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, who was pastor at Northampton, Mass., for more than fifty years, and one of the most eminent ministers of his day. From his mother, who was a woman of superior ability and excellent education, he inherited not only his delicate features and gentle

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, xxvi., 255.

disposition, but also a large measure of his intellectual force. His father, who was distinguished as a Latin, Greek, and Hebrew scholar, was accustomed for many years, in addition to his regular ministerial duties, to prepare young men for college. With no mediæval prejudice against the higher education of woman, he instructed his daughters (there were no fewer than ten of them) in the same studies pursued by the young men. It was in this cultivated and studious home, under the refining influence and instruction of his older sisters, that young Edwards received his preparatory training.

In his childhood he exhibited extraordinary precocity. He was not, as sometimes happens, so absorbed in his books as to lose taste for the observation of nature. For an English correspondent of his father's, he wrote at the age of twelve years an elaborate paper upon spiders, which shows remarkable powers of observation. It is said actually to have enlarged the boundaries of scientific knowledge. Had the young author given himself to natural science, there can be no doubt that he would have stood in the foremost rank.

In 1716, when in his thirteenth year, young Edwards entered Yale College. It was the day of small things with the institution; and the president residing at a distance of forty miles, the government and discipline were chiefly in the hands of tutors. The result was, as might be expected, a good deal of idleness and disorder among the students. But such was young Edwards's thirst for knowledge that he not only refrained from the insubordination of his fellow-students, but by his scholarship and integrity retained their respect and confidence.

At the age of fourteen he read Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding;" and though it can hardly be classed as juvenile literature, he declared that in the perusal of it he enjoyed a far higher pleasure "than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly discovered treasure." While proficient in every department of study, he excelled especially in mental science. He had been trained by his father to make much use of the pen in studying;

and while still an undergraduate, he began to put into clear shape his ideas about the leading terms of mental philosophy, such as cause, existence, space, time, substance, matter, and so on. His notebook of this period shows surprising depth of thought and lucidity of expression. At graduation he stood head and shoulders above his class.

Religion, which became the dominant interest of his subsequent life, engaged his attention toward the end of his college course. He passed through the deep spiritual conflicts that so often, especially under the Puritan type of faith, are associated with profoundly earnest natures. But at last his spiritual struggles issued in a sweet "sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God" — a feeling that added a strange charm to external nature. "The appearance of every thing," he says, "was altered. There seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing."

After graduating, he spent nearly two years at the college in theological study. At the age of nineteen he was licensed to preach the gospel, and sent to New York to minister to a small congregation of Presbyterians. Though he filled the pulpit with great acceptance, the relation did not become permanent, and in 1723 he was elected tutor in Yale College. At this time the office of tutor was a trying position, and it is a significant fact that a year later he wrote: "I have now abundant reason to be convinced of the troublesomeness and vexation of the world, and that it never will be another kind of a world." But such was his skill in discipline and success in instruction, that President Stiles spoke of him and his associates as "the pillar tutors, and the glory of the college at this critical period."

In his twentieth year, and just before entering upon his tutorship, he drew up seventy resolutions for the government of his heart and life. Though they are tinged with a Puritan austerity, and unduly accentuate, perhaps, the religious element of life, they reveal an extraordinary depth and earnestness of character.

In 1726 Jonathan Edwards was called as pastor to Northampton, where the next twenty-four years of his life were passed. The following year he was married to Miss Pierrepont of New Haven, a lady who added to unusual intellectual gifts and attainments an executive ability and considerate sympathy that fitted her in an eminent degree to be the helpmate of her husband. She relieved him entirely of domestic cares. There is a tradition that he did not know his own cows. Though his constant inattention to the concerns of his household hardly rendered him a model husband, he gave himself with all the more devotion to his sermons and theological studies. He regularly spent thirteen hours a day in his study; and when out for recreation, which was usually on horseback, he carried pen and paper with him to note down such valuable thoughts as might occur to him. In order to keep up the necessary physical strength for his great intellectual labors, he was careful to take regular exercise, and observed the strictest temperance in eating and drinking. He was exceedingly thorough in his methods of study. He could never be satisfied with hasty or superficial work; and as we read his sermons and numerous volumes, his clearness of view, his power of analysis, and his irresistible cogency of reasoning, afford continual astonishment and pleasure.

Among the many able preachers of America, he stands as one of the greatest. He dwelt habitually on the weightiest doctrines of the Christian faith; and in his treatment of them there is a Miltonic grasp of thought and vigor of language. He was not eloquent in manner or expression; his voice was weak, and he kept his eyes closely fixed on his manuscript; but such was his overpowering spiritual earnestness that his sermons were sometimes startling in their effect. When he preached his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the feelings of his audience deepened into an insupportable agony; and at last the cry burst forth, "What must we do to be saved?" In those days people did not go to church to be entertained; and with an endurance that seems

almost incredible now, they listened, with unflagging attention, to closely reasoned sermons two hours long. It was for audiences of this kind that the sermons of Edwards were prepared; and to such persons as take them up with sufficient determination, and are able to appreciate their powerful reasoning, they appear veritable masterpieces.

Under his preaching in 1735 there began at Northampton a new interest in religion, which afterwards extending throughout the American colonies has been known as the "Great Awakening." The celebrated Whitefield contributed much to this revival. Though attended at times with great excitement and extravagance, this movement upon the whole seems to have been helpful to morality and piety. It was in this connection that Edwards wrote "Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England" — a work of such spiritual discernment, practical wisdom, and conservative judgment, that it has since been regarded as an authority on the subject. He was not friendly to the fanatical tendencies sometimes exhibited during the "Great Awakening;" and in order to distinguish between the true and the false evidences of a Christian life, he wrote his "Treatise concerning the Religious Affections." Though defective in style, as indeed are all his works, it occupies a very high rank as a treatise on practical religion.

For nearly twenty years Jonathan Edwards had a firm hold upon the affections of his people. Then there came a reaction, which finally resulted in his being ejected from his pastoral charge. Contrary to the prevailing custom at Northampton and in other parts of New England, he maintained that only consistent Christians should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. A bitter controversy followed. Though contending with heroic courage for what he believed to be right, he constantly exhibited the beauty of a meek and forgiving spirit. He was finally forced to resign in 1750.

In 1751 he was called to Stockbridge, forty miles west of Northampton, to serve as pastor to a congregation there, and

at the same time to act as missionary to a tribe of Indians in the vicinity. The congregation was small, and the work among the Indians unpromising. It was a field that especially required persistent personal work. Confirmed, as he was, in retiring and studious habits, it is not strange that, in spite of his faithful preaching, he was unsuccessful as a missionary. But among the unfavorable surroundings of a frontier settlement, he continued his literary labors, and composed his ablest works.

In 1754 appeared his famous treatise entitled "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will." It is his greatest work, the argument of which he had been slowly elaborating for years. It placed him at once, not only at the head of American writers, but among the world's profoundest thinkers. "On the arena of metaphysics," says the great Dr. Chalmers, "he stood the highest of all his contemporaries, and that, too, at a time when Hume was aiming his deadliest thrusts at the foundations of morality, and had thrown over the infidel cause the whole *éclat* of his reputation." According to the judgment of Sir James Mackintosh, "In the power of subtile argument, he was, perhaps, unmatched, certainly unsurpassed among men." Among his other works published while he was at Stockbridge are "A Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue," and a treatise on "Original Sin."

In 1758 he was called to the presidency of the College of New Jersey, a position which he accepted with hesitancy and misgivings. He questioned his natural aptitude for the office, and hesitated to assume duties that would interfere with the studious habits of his life. In a letter to the trustees, in which he speaks with great frankness, he furnishes some interesting facts about his manner of life. "My method of study," he says, "from my first beginning the work of the ministry, has been very much by writing; applying myself, in this way, to improve every important hint; pursuing the clue to my utmost, when any thing in reading, meditation, or conversation, has been suggested to my mind, that seemed to promise light in

any weighty point; thus penning what appeared to me my best thoughts, on innumerable subjects, for my own benefit." In the same letter he speaks of a great work that he had on his "mind and heart;" namely, his "History of the Work of Redemption."

The plan, as he outlines it, reminds us of Milton and Dante. "This history," he says, "will be carried on with regard to all three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell; considering the connected, successive events and alterations in each, so far as the Scriptures give any light; introducing all parts of divinity in that order which is most Scriptural and most natural, a method which appears to me the most beautiful and entertaining, wherein every divine doctrine will appear to the greatest advantage, in the brightest light, and in the most striking manner, showing the admirable contexture and harmony of the whole." This work, so grandly outlined, was left unfinished at his death; but the manuscript sermons, which formed the basis of it, were reduced to the form of a treatise by his friend Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh, and the work, which has had a wide circulation, first appeared in that city in 1777.

He was inaugurated as president of the College of New Jersey in 1758, but performed the duties of his office less than five weeks. The smallpox having made its appearance in Princeton, he deemed it advisable to be inoculated. At that time inoculation was regarded as a more serious thing than at present. The trustees were consulted, and gave their consent. A skilful physician was engaged to come from Philadelphia to perform the operation; but in spite of all precautions, the inoculation terminated fatally. He died March 22, 1758, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. In his last hours he retained the beautiful faith and resignation that had characterized his active life. Shortly before he expired, some friends, not thinking that he heard them, were lamenting the loss that his death would bring to the college and the church. Interrupting them he said, "Trust in God, and ye need not fear." These were his last words.

"Other men have, do doubt, excelled him in particular qualities or accomplishments. There have been far more learned men; far more eloquent men; far more enterprising and active men, in the out-door work of the sacred office. But, in the assemblage and happy union of those high qualities, intellectual and moral, which constitute finished excellence, as a man, a Christian, a divine, and a philosopher, he was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest and best men that have adorned this, or any other country, since the Apostolic age."¹

¹ Miller, *Life of Jonathan Edwards*, p. 213.

REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

THOMAS JEFFERSON. ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

OTHER WRITERS

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (1771-1810). Was the first American novelist. He wrote "Wieland," "Ormond," and "Arthur Mervyn." He was the first of our authors to make a living out of literature.

JOHN TRUMBULL (1750-1831). Wrote "McFingal," a satire upon the Tories in the manner of Butler's "Hudibras."

JOEL BARLOW (1754-1812). Wrote the "Columbiad," a very dull epic. His "Hasty Pudding" is still readable.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1737-1791). Wrote the most popular ballad of the Revolution, entitled the "Battle of the Kegs."

PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832). Poet, editor, and political writer. His two best poems are "Lines to a Wild Honeysuckle" and "The Indian Burying-Ground."

TIMOTHY DWIGHT (1752-1817). President of Yale College from 1795 to the time of his death. A theologian whose works are still instructive. He wrote the hymn "I love thy Kingdom, Lord," and the patriotic song, "Columbia, Columbia, to Glory Arise."

JOSEPH HOPKINSON (1770-1842). Wrote "Hail Columbia."

THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809). Author of "Common Sense," a patriotic pamphlet, "The Rights of Man," a defence of the French Revolution, and "The Age of Reason," a coarse attack upon Christianity.

JAMES MADISON (1751-1836) and JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826) were great statesmen and able political writers. The former was one of the writers of the "Federalist," and the latter wrote an elaborate "Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States."

JOHN MARSHALL (1755-1835). Statesman and Chief-Justice of the United States. He wrote a standard "Life of Washington."

WILLIAM WIRT (1772-1834). Lawyer and politician. He wrote "Letters of a British Spy," and a "Life of Patrick Henry."

III.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

(1763-1815.)

THE Revolutionary Period embraces about fifty years, and includes two events of great importance. The first of these is the War of Independence ; the other, the adoption of the Constitution. Around these two events gathers nearly all the literature of the time. This literature can be understood only as we comprehend the spirit and principles of the founders of our republic. No other period better illustrates the relation of literature to prevailing social conditions. For half a century the struggle against British injustice and oppression, and the establishment of a great national government, absorbed a large part of the intellectual energies of the people. Great practical questions were pressing for solution. It was the age of political pamphlets and popular oratory. The literature of the time arose, not to enrich the treasures of artistic expression, but to mould and move popular thought and action.

The leaders of the revolutionary movement were heroes. We cannot peruse their determined and often eloquent words without being moved with admiration. There is an ardor in them that kindles anew the spirit of freedom. The deliberate and resolute courage of the Revolutionary patriots has never been surpassed. True to the spirit of their forefathers, who had sought refuge from oppression

in the wilds of a new continent, they were bravely jealous of their liberties. With Anglo-Saxon fidelity they were loyal to England until repeated and inexcusable acts of tyranny drove them into resistance. It was only when the hope of receiving justice from the mother country had completely died out, that the desire and purpose of independence arose.

The general cause of the Revolution was the stupid and tyrannical claim of the British government "to bind the colonies in all things whatsoever." The fatal course of George III. and of his ministers may be best explained as a madness sent from heaven, like the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, to prepare the way for the coming of a great nation. For many years the British king, supported by Parliament, had pursued a policy of usurpation and tyranny. The list of grievances in the Declaration of Independence, where each statement points to a particular fact, makes up a terrific indictment. Jefferson was only faithful to facts when he declared, "The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of unremitting injuries and usurpations, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states." The petitions and remonstrances of the colonists remained unnoticed. The king demanded absolute and abject submission.

But it was impossible that the people of America should become a race of slaves. Liberty was a part of their inheritance as Englishmen. They cherished the memory of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights of 1689. The tragic fate of Charles I., brought to the block for his tyranny, was not forgotten. The hardships and dangers

connected with the subjugation of an untamed continent had served to develop their native strength, courage, and independence. They were the last people in the world tamely to submit to oppression and wrong. They maintained that, by nature as well as by common law, the right of taxation rests with the people. To take their property by taxation without their consent was justly held to be tyranny. When, in violation of this fundamental principle of civil liberty, the British government persisted in the claim to tax the colonies at pleasure, the inevitable result was united and resolute resistance.

The necessities of the times produced a generation of political thinkers and writers. The Continental Congress of 1774, which included among its members Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams, was one of extraordinary ability. No abler legislative body ever came together. The leaders of popular thought were forced to reflect upon the fundamental principles of government. The result was a clearness of vision in relation to human rights that is almost without parallel. The discussions and state papers of the time have extorted praise from the ablest European statesmen. Many of the speeches of the time possess an eloquence that compares favorably with the highest oratory of either ancient or modern times. While the *belles-lettres* literature of the Revolutionary Period is insignificant in both quantity and quality, no more interesting or important body of political literature was ever brought together in the same space of time. It is necessary to mention only the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and "The Federalist."

In the beginning of the revolutionary movement, the people of America did not aim at independence. They

were loyal to England. At first their object was simply to correct the injustice done them by the British government. Their petitions were accompanied with sincere professions of loyalty to the British crown. But the spirit of independence imperceptibly gained in strength. At last, as the conflict deepened, separation from Great Britain became inevitable. Submission and reconciliation were no longer possible. On the 4th of July, 1776, the representatives of the colonies, in Congress assembled, issued their sublime Declaration of Independence, and America entered upon its career of grandeur and freedom.

The Americans based the justice of their cause on two grounds: first, their rights as Englishmen; and second, their natural rights as men. Since the days of the Great Charter, the king had been denied the right of imposing taxes at pleasure. The attempt to do so was an act of tyranny that had already cost one king his head. The colonies maintained that they were not under the jurisdiction of Parliament. They were not represented in that body. The right of taxation rested only with their own popular assemblies. The effort of Parliament to impose taxes upon them was, therefore, an evident usurpation of authority.

But the American colonists went farther than a defence of their rights under the constitution and common law of England. They appealed to their natural rights as men. "Among the natural rights of the colonists," wrote Samuel Adams in 1772, "are these: First, a right to life; secondly, to liberty; thirdly, to property — together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can." In the Declaration of Independence the same appeal is made to fundamental natural principles.

The happy issue of the Revolution in 1783 settled forever the questions which related to British oppression, and which for twenty years had so largely occupied the thought of Americans. Then followed an era of discussion in relation to the form and powers of the national government. During the Revolution there had been no central power. Under the Articles of Confederation adopted in 1778, the colonies were organized into a loose confederacy. Congress was narrowly restricted in its powers, and the ratification of nine States was necessary to complete an act of legislation. "The fundamental defect of the Confederation," says Jefferson, "was that Congress was not authorized to act immediately on the people, and by its own officers. Their power was only requisitory; and these requisitions were addressed to the several legislatures, to be by them carried into execution, without other coercion than the moral principle of duty. This allowed, in fact, a negative to every legislature, on every measure proposed by Congress; a negative so frequently exercised in practice, as to benumb the action of the Federal government, and to render it inefficient in its general objects, and more especially in pecuniary and foreign concerns." During the continuance of the Revolution, the sense of common danger naturally held the colonies together. The requisitions of Congress were generally complied with. But after the war, the country fell into great disorder and distress, and the inadequacy of the Confederation became generally apparent.

Accordingly, in 1787, a general convention was held in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Washington was chosen president. A committee of revision submitted as its report the first draft of the present

Constitution of the United States. The discussions, which were secret, lasted for several months ; and in view of conflicting opinions and interests, the convention was several times on the point of giving up in despair. The nation trembled on the brink of dissolution and ruin. But in each instance further deliberation resulted in compromise and agreement. When completed, the Constitution did not wholly satisfy any one ; it was unanimously accepted, however, as the best result attainable under the circumstances. It remedied the obvious defects of the Articles of Confederation. It established a national government with legislative, executive, and judicial departments ; and the results thus far have justified the judgment of Gladstone, that it is "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

After the completion of the work of the convention, the Constitution came before the people of the several States for ratification or rejection. For the first time the American people were divided into two great parties. All local differences were swallowed up in the larger issue relating to the national government. Those who favored the adoption of the Constitution were known as Federalists ; those who opposed it were called Anti-Federalists. Political feeling ran high. The question of ratification was discussed in the newspaper and debated in the public assembly. Party opinion was sometimes emphasized by mob violence. In New York the leader of the Anti-Federalists was Governor Clinton. The leader on the opposite side was Hamilton, who, in co-operation with Madison and Jay, largely influenced popular sentiment by the series of powerful essays known collectively as "The Federalist." In Virginia, Patrick Henry used all his influence and elo-

quence to prevent the adoption of the Constitution ; but he was successfully opposed by Edmund Randolph, governor of the State.

The general ground of opposition lay, first, in dislike of a strong national government ; and secondly, in the absence of sufficient guarantees (since supplied by amendments) to secure the liberties of the people. The reasons in favor of adoption are succinctly stated in the preamble of the Constitution itself : namely, “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

In spite of the strong feeling against the Constitution, it was ratified by eleven States before the end of 1788. The following year the new government was inaugurated, with Washington as the unanimous choice of the people for president. There remained, however, many perplexing questions to be settled. The financial policy of the government ; the relations of the United States with foreign powers ; the acquisition of new territory — these were some of the questions that engaged the attention of thoughtful minds. In 1812 it again became necessary to meet British insolence and aggression by force. The ground of hostilities was compressed into the rallying cry of “Free trade and sailors’ rights.” In a conflict lasting more than two years, England was again defeated. With the happy solution of all these problems, and the rapid development in population and wealth, the United States at last assumed an honorable place among the great family of nations.

Such were the prevailing influences controlling litera-

ture during the Revolutionary Period. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the entire literary activity of the country was confined to popular oratory, political pamphlets, and official documents. Theology was not entirely neglected; and Timothy Dwight's "Theology Explained and Defended," in a series of sermons, was a standard in its day, and may still be studied with profit. The mighty influences at work naturally sought an auxiliary in poetry. Accordingly, we find a large number of satires, more or less extended, many popular ballads, mostly crude in composition, and at least one pretentious epic, so stately and tedious that it is never read. Here and there we find a poem or other literary production independent of the political controversies of the time. Such is Philip Freneau's "The Wild Honeysuckle:" —

"Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honey'd blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet;
No roving foot shall find thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear."

Here should be mentioned also the works of Charles Brockden Brown, who has the credit of first introducing fiction into American literature.

The principal satire of the period is John Trumbull's "McFingal," which was undertaken, as he tells us, "with a political view, at the instigation of some leading members of the first Congress," and was published in part in Philadelphia in 1775. It is written in imitation of Butler's "Hudibras," and does not suffer in comparison with that famous satire upon the Puritans of England. Some

of its lines are easily mistaken for Butler's, and have been so quoted ; for example : —

“A thief ne'er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law.”

Or this, —

“For any man with half an eye
What stands before him may espy ;
But optics sharp it needs, I ween,
To see what is not to be seen.”

Trumbull does not always spare his countrymen. In the following lines there is a very good hit at slavery. After describing the erection of a liberty-pole, he continues : —

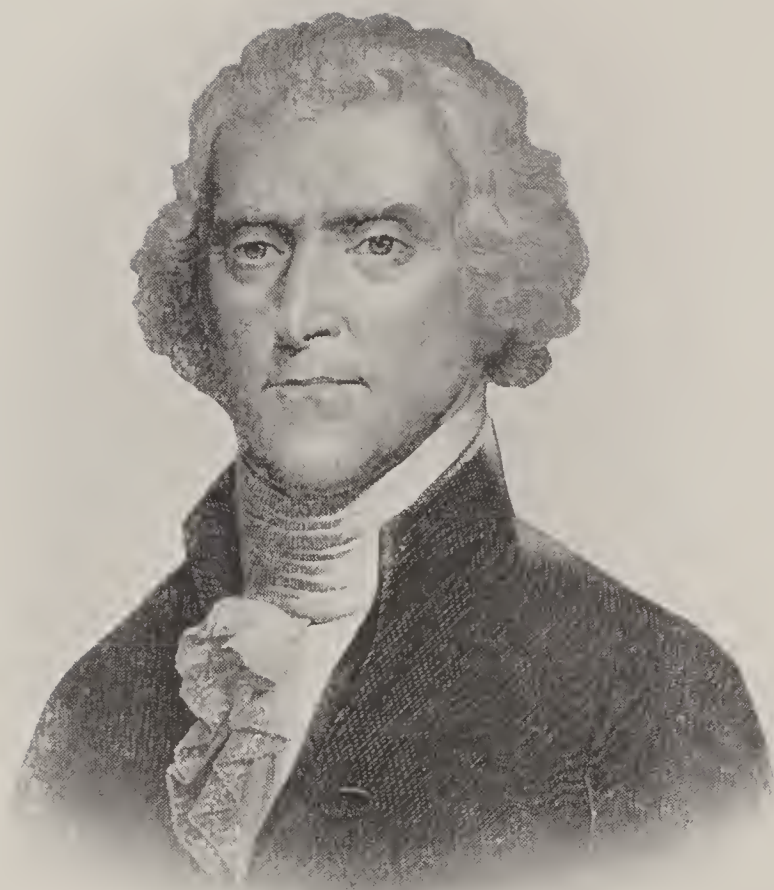
“And on its top, the flag unfurled
Waved triumph o'er the gazing world,
Inscribed with inconsistent types
Of liberty and thirteen stripes.”

The hero McFingal is a Tory squire, who in resisting the Whigs comes to grief, and suffers the peculiar revolutionary punishment of tar and feathers.

“Yankee Doodle ” belongs to this period. The tune is an old one ; and the hero himself, who had previously figured in Holland and England, may be regarded as American only by adoption. The song was first used in derision of the motley troops of the colonies ; but like many another term of reproach, Yankee Doodle was taken up by the American soldiery, and made a designation of honor. The first complete set of words appears to date from 1775, and is entitled “The Yankee's Return from Camp.”

“Father and I went down to camp
Along with Captain Gooding ;
And there we see the men and boys
As thick as hasty-pudding.”

In 1807 "The Columbiad," an epic poem in ten books, by Joel Barlow, made its appearance in a sumptuous edition. It is our first epic poem, and this fact constitutes its principal claim upon our attention. The plan of the work is very simple. While Columbus is lying in prison, the victim of his country's ingratitude, Hesper appears, and conducts him to the "hill of vision" commanding the western continent. Here the celestial visitant unfolds to the great discoverer the history of America, including the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, the establishment of the English colonies, the French and Indian War, and the Revolution. Last of all, "the progress and influences of modern art and science are pointed out, the advantages of the federal government, and of a larger confederation of nations, with an assimilation and unity of language; an abandonment of war, and a final blaze of rockets over the emancipation of the world from prejudice, and a general millennium of philosophic joy and freedom."



THOMAS JEFFERSON.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Do great epochs make great men, or do great men make great epochs? This question has often been discussed; and the consideration of every important era is likely to start it afresh. Neither question is true to the exclusion of the other. Great epochs and great men go together, each exerting an influence upon the other. In a nation, as in an individual, there is usually a large amount of ability unutilized. Under ordinary conditions it lies latent. When there comes that conflict of ideas, and often of physical force, which marks a new stage in human progress, the latent energies of the people are roused to action: great men rise to meet the responsibilities and to seize the opportunities presented to them. They often succeed in directing or controlling the new movement, and out of chaos they bring forth order and beauty.

Among the great men developed and brought into prominence by the conflict with Great Britain, a very high place must be assigned to Thomas Jefferson. After Washington, whom a grateful country has invested with an almost ideal beauty, he must be ranked with Adams, Franklin, and Hamilton, as one of the founders of our republic. Among the many distinguished sons whom Virginia has given to America, Jefferson stands very close after "the father of his country." His labors in the Legislature of Virginia, in the Continental Congress, and afterwards in the president's chair, displayed the wisdom and the patriotism of a great statesman.

Thomas Jefferson was born in Albemarle County, April 2, 1743. His father, who was of Welsh descent, was a man of no great learning, but of excellent judgment and great physical strength. His mother, who was a Randolph, belonged to

one of the most distinguished Virginia families. The Randolphs traced their pedigree to noble families in England and Scotland — a fact “to which,” says Jefferson in his “Autobiography,” “let every one ascribe the faith and merit he chooses.” Considering the mental and physical traits of his father and mother, we see that Jefferson was fortunate in his parentage.

After an excellent preparatory training, including English, French, Latin, and Greek, Jefferson entered William and Mary College, which was generally patronized at that time by the aristocratic families of Virginia. He was a diligent student, often working, as he tells us, fifteen hours a day. He united a decided taste for both mathematics and the classics. He had little taste for fiction, and it is said that “Don Quixote” is the only novel he ever keenly relished or read a second time. He delighted in poetry, and read Homer, Horace, Tasso, Molière, Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope. For a time he was extravagantly fond of Ossian, and “was not ashamed to own that he thought this rude bard of the North the greatest poet that had ever existed.” But many years before his death he formed a juster estimate of Macpherson’s forgeries. He took no interest in metaphysical studies, and frequently expressed “unmitigated contempt for Plato and his writings.”

While in Williamsburg, at that time the capital of the State, Jefferson became a law student under George Wythe, one of the ablest and purest lawyers Virginia has produced. He won the favor of Governor Fauquier, at whose table he was a frequent guest. “With him,” Jefferson writes, “Dr. Small and Mr. Wythe, his *amici omnium horarum*, and myself formed a *partie quarrée*, and to the habitual conversations on these occasions I owed much instruction.” This intimate fellowship with learned and distinguished men while he was yet scarcely out of his teens, indicates the presence of no ordinary intellectual and social gifts.

In 1767, at the age of twenty-four, Jefferson entered upon the practice of law. His preparation had been thorough, and

he was eminently successful from the start. Though he was not, like his friend Patrick Henry, an eloquent speaker, he was a man of excellent judgment and untiring industry. While capable of seizing at once upon the strong points of a case, he had a genius for details. Nothing can surpass the minuteness of his observations, and the patience of his methodical classification. He was rapidly advancing to a prominent place among the ablest lawyers of Virginia, when the struggle with Great Britain called him to a wider and more important field of action.

In 1769 Jefferson was elected a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses for his native county. The aristocratic class, to which he belonged by birth and association, was generally conservative. They were loyal to the English crown and to the English church. It speaks forcibly for Jefferson's patriotism and for his noble independence of character, that he threw off his inherited prejudices and sided with the colonies. At this meeting of the House of Burgesses resolutions were passed boldly declaring that the right of levying taxes in Virginia belonged to themselves; that they possessed the privilege of petitioning the king for a redress of grievances; and that the transportation to England of persons accused of treason in the colonies, in order to be tried there, was unconstitutional and unjust. In advocating these resolutions, Jefferson took a decided and prominent part.

In 1772 Jefferson married Mrs. Martha Skelton, a young widow of great attractions in person, mind, and estate. She was of frank, warm-hearted disposition; and "last, not least, she had already proved herself a true daughter of the Old Dominion in the department of house-wifery." She added to her husband's estate, which was already very large, about forty thousand acres of land and one hundred and thirty-five slaves. Thus they were unembarrassed by those disagreeable domestic economies that sometimes interfere with wedded bliss; and Monticello became as noted for bounteous hospitality as for domestic felicity.

In 1773 Jefferson was again in the House of Burgesses. The gathering storm became more threatening. A resolution, ordering the appointment of a committee of correspondence with the other colonies, was passed. Jefferson was a leading member of this committee, and its duties were promptly and ably discharged. The result was of the highest importance. Similar committees were appointed in the other colonies; and thus a means of communication was opened among them, the feeling of common interest was strengthened, and a general congress met the following year to consider the great questions that were agitating the continent.

In 1774 the British Parliament, in retaliation for the famous "Tea Party," passed the Boston Port Bill, which aimed to deprive that town of its foreign trade. When the news of this bill reached Williamsburg, the patriot leaders, Jefferson, Henry, the Lees, and others, met as usual for consultation, and resolved to take steps to rouse the "people from the lethargy into which they had fallen." A day of fasting and prayer was agreed on as the best expedient to accomplish their object. Accordingly, a resolution was "cooked up," to use Jefferson's rather irreverent phrase, "appointing the first day of June, on which the Port Bill was to commence, for a day of *fasting, humiliation, and prayer*, to implore Heaven to avert from us the evils of civil war, to inspire us with firmness in the support of our rights, and to turn the hearts of the king and parliament to moderation and justice." The scheme was successfully carried through. The day was fittingly observed; and the effect throughout the colony was like an electric shock, arousing every man to a sense of the situation.

Jefferson was prevented by illness from attending the convention which met several months later to elect delegates to the first general congress. But he forwarded a paper which he proposed as instructions for their guidance. The paper was regarded as too strong for formal adoption by the convention; but it was ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, under the title of "A Summary View of the Rights of British America."

It is a production remarkable for its strong statement of the natural and constitutional rights of the colonies, and for a particular enumeration of the various acts of injustice and tyranny on the part of the British government. It supplied principles, facts, and phrases for the Declaration of Independence two years later.

In June, 1775, Jefferson took his seat in the Continental Congress. He was then thirty-two years old — the youngest member but one in that illustrious body. His reputation as a writer and patriot had preceded him, and he accordingly met with a flattering reception. He now entered upon that larger sphere of action that closely identified him for many years with his country's history. On the floor of Congress he spoke but little, for he was neither an orator nor a debater. But he was so clear in his convictions, and so active in committee and in his personal relations with his fellow-members, that he exerted a strong influence. "Prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive" are the terms in which John Adams described him at this period. He had been in Congress but five days when he was appointed on a committee to prepare a report on "the causes of taking up arms against England." Here, as in the Virginia legislature, he showed himself bold, resolute, and defiant.

Events of great importance now followed one another in rapid succession. The blood shed at Lexington and Bunker Hill had thoroughly roused the American people. Reconciliation was recognized, even by the most conservative, as no longer possible. The colonies, throwing off British rule, were organizing independent governments. On the 7th of June Richard Henry Lee, acting under instructions from the Virginia convention, offered in Congress a resolution declaring that the "United States are, and of a right ought to be, free and independent states." As it seemed impossible to secure unanimity of action at that time, a final vote was postponed till the first of July. Meanwhile, a committee, consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger

Sherman, and Robert Livingston, was appointed to prepare a suitable Declaration of Independence. The preparation of this important document was devolved upon Jefferson. Adams and Franklin made a few verbal changes. When taken up in Congress, it was discussed for two days, and numerous changes and omissions were made. Finally, on July 4, 1776, it was almost unanimously adopted, and the foundation of a great republic was laid.

A new government had been established in Virginia, and Jefferson elected a member of the legislature. Believing that he could render important service to his native State, where there were "many very vicious points which urgently required reformation," he resigned his seat in Congress. He became once more a leading spirit in the legislature of Virginia, and carried through several bills which changed in large measure the subsequent social condition of the State. Among these was a bill abolishing the system of entails, and another establishing religious freedom, — one of the three great acts of his life for which he wished to be remembered.

It was also in connection with a bill requiring a general revision of the laws that Jefferson proposed his educational system, providing for the establishment of schools of every grade. Had it been carried out, it would have contributed immeasurably to the intelligence of the people and the prosperity of the State. His plan contemplated, to use his own words, "1st. Elementary schools, for all children generally, rich and poor. 2d. Colleges for a middle degree of instruction, calculated for the common purposes of life, and such as would be desirable for all who were in easy circumstances. And 3d. An ultimate grade for teaching the sciences generally, and in their highest degree." The support of these schools was to be provided for by general taxation. But inasmuch as the system thus threw on the rich and aristocratic classes, who had the law-making power in their hands, a large part of the burden of educating the poor, it was never carried into effect.

It is beyond the limits of this sketch to trace at any length the subsequent public career of Jefferson. In 1779 he was elected governor of Virginia, and discharged the duties of that office, at a difficult period, with fidelity and ability. In 1783 he was again elected a delegate to Congress. The currency of the country coming under discussion, Jefferson proposed the dollar as our unit of account and payment, and its subdivision into dimes, cents, and mills in the decimal ratio—the system, it is needless to say, that was adopted. In 1784 he was appointed to go to France, for the purpose of negotiating, in connection with Franklin and Adams, treaties of commerce. After a time he was appointed minister to the Court of Versailles, where his talents, culture, and character reflected credit upon his country.

In 1789 Jefferson received permission to return to this country. During his absence the Constitution had been adopted, and the new government inaugurated, with Washington as President. Jefferson accepted a place in the cabinet as Secretary of State. He reached New York, the seat of government at that time, in March, 1790. Having left France the first year of its Revolution, he was filled with ardor for the natural rights of man. He was therefore surprised and grieved to find, as he thought, a sentiment prevailing in favor of a consolidated or even monarchical form of government.

This introduces us to a new phase in Jefferson's life. With immovable convictions in favor of democratic principles, he opposed with all his might the tendency to consolidate or centralize the federal government. He became the recognized leader of the party in favor of State rights and a general government of restricted and carefully defined powers. His opponent in the cabinet was Alexander Hamilton, a man of extraordinary ability and energy, who for a time exerted great influence upon the policy of the government. In spite of Washington's effort to preserve harmony, the irreconcilable conflict of principles between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury degenerated into bitter personal hos-

tility. At length, in December, 1793, Jefferson carried out his long-cherished purpose of resigning.

During the next several years, Jefferson lived upon his estate at Monticello, engaged in the agricultural pursuits for which he had longed for many years. But he was not to spend the rest of his life in retirement. In the election of 1801, which was attended with extraordinary excitement and danger to the republic, the Federalists, who had controlled the government for twelve years, were defeated. Their party was divided, and the Alien and Sedition Laws were not sustained by public sentiment. Jefferson, the candidate of the Republican or Democratic party, was chosen President. In his inaugural address he laid down an admirable summary of principles, among which were "equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority; and economy in the public expense that labor may be lightly burdened."

His administration, in conformity with the principles he had announced, was a brilliant one. He introduced republican simplicity in place of the stately formalities of previous administrations. He greatly reduced the public debt; the territorial area of the United States was doubled; taxes were decreased; a war with France and Spain was honorably averted; the Barbary pirates were subdued; and the internal prosperity of the country vastly increased. His popularity became second only to that of Washington himself. He was accordingly re-elected for a second term, throughout which he continued, likewise, to administer the affairs of the government with great wisdom and broad statesmanship.

In 1809, after witnessing the inauguration of his successor, Madison, Jefferson left Washington for Monticello. After forty years of political turmoil and strife, he retired finally to the seclusion of private life. During this closing period, which was burdened by financial embarrassment, he gave much

time and labor to the founding of the University of Virginia. He planned the buildings, designated the departments of instruction, and framed the laws for its government. As president of the Board, he exerted a controlling influence for a number of years. The scheme of government at first proposed, which included a co-operative feature, did not come up to his expectations. It erred on the side of laxity; and very soon a spirit of riot and insubordination among the students brought the university to the verge of dissolution. Stricter regulations were afterwards adopted, and the university entered upon its career of usefulness and honor.

With advancing years naturally came increased infirmity. As the end drew near in the summer of 1826, he earnestly desired to see one more return of the day that commemorated the Declaration of Independence. His prayer was heard. He passed away on the morning of July 4, fifty years after the adoption of his immortal Declaration. A nation mourned his death. The voice of partisan prejudice was lost for a time in the general homage paid to his life and character. He was buried at Monticello, where a modest granite shaft marks his resting-place. It bears the inscription composed by himself and found among his papers:—

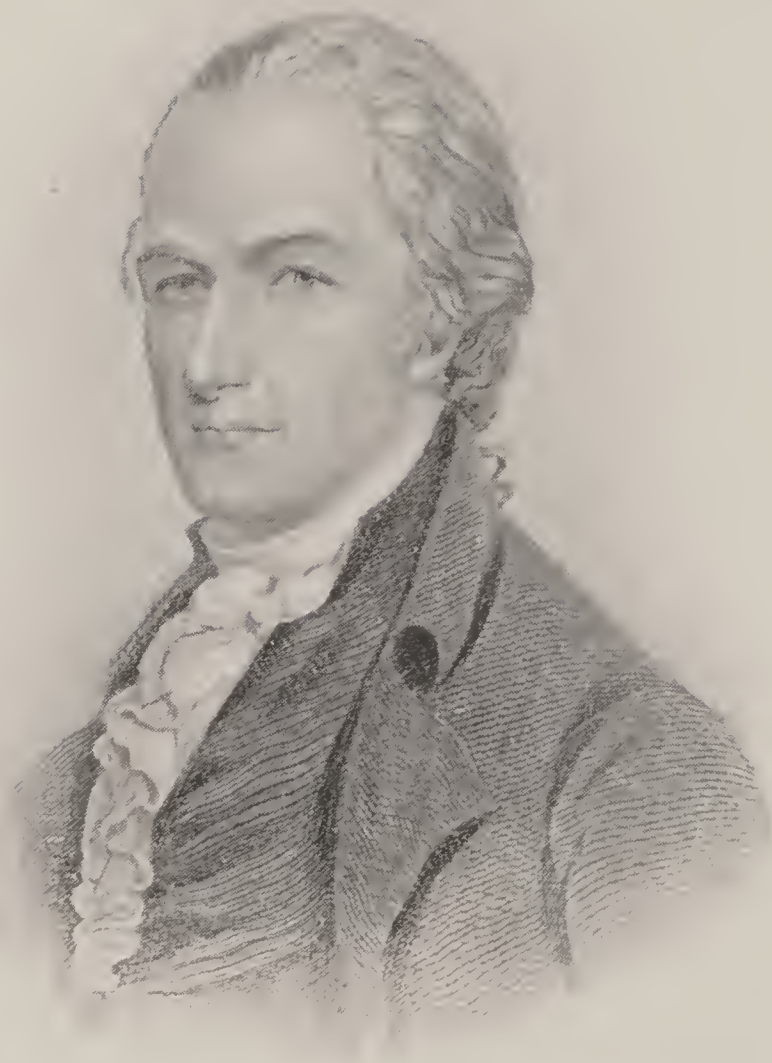
HERE LIES BURIED

THOMAS JEFFERSON,

AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,
OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,
AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

The general features of his character have been brought out in the course of this sketch. He was a frank and honest man; and as he expressed himself freely in his writings, we have ample facilities for knowing him well. His intellect was capacious, penetrating, and strong. To the refinement of a superior literary culture he added rich stores of general information. He was singularly independent in thought and

action — a natural leader among men. He was a prince among statesmen. The services he rendered his country are second only to those of Washington. His fundamental political faith was that all legitimate government is based on the consent of the governed. He had faith in humanity, and was opposed to aristocratic institutions of every kind. He was the friend of popular liberty. His integrity was above reproach. He loved a life of simplicity and retirement; and nowhere else does he appear more admirable than in the patriarchal dignity with which he presided over his large estate and numerous dependents at Monticello.



A Hamilton

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

It is not without reason that we inquire after the ancestry of our great men. The transmission of personal and national traits from parents to children is a well-established fact. While heredity does not explain every peculiarity in offspring, it often furnishes us a key to leading traits. In order to understand any character thoroughly, it is necessary to know his antecedents. All this is illustrated in Alexander Hamilton, who was born on the island of Nevis, Jan. 11, 1757. "From his father, a cool, deliberate, calculating Scotchman, he inherited the shrewdness, the logical habits of thought, which constitute the peculiar glory of the Scottish mind. From his mother, a lady of French extraction, and the daughter of a Huguenot exile, he inherited the easy manners, the liveliness and vivacity, the keen sense of humor, the desire and the ability to please, which so eminently distinguish the children of the Celtic race."¹

When yet a mere boy, he was placed in a clerkship, and intrusted with the management of important interests. He met the responsibilities thrown upon him with extraordinary ability. But he was not at peace in the drudgery of his position. He felt in himself, as many other great men have felt in youth, the promise of higher things. In a letter preserved to us from this period, he says: "I condemn the grovelling condition of a clerk, or the like, to which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hopes of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity." This ambitious

¹ McMaster, History of the People of the United States.

purpose in a boy of thirteen contains the promise of future distinction.

He had a decided bent for literature. Pope and Plutarch were at that time his favorite authors. His unusual abilities began to attract attention, and finally funds were provided to send him to America, where a wider field of opportunity was open to him. He reached Boston in October, 1772, and thence went to New York. By the advice of judicious friends, he entered a grammar school at Elizabethtown, where he pursued his studies with restless energy. His literary instinct found vent in both prose and poetry, which possessed noteworthy merit. At the end of a year he entered King's (afterwards Columbia) College, where he continued his studies with characteristic vigor. "In the debating club," it has been said, "he was the most effective speaker; in the recitation-room, the most thorough scholar; on the green, the most charming friend; in the trial of wit, the keenest satirist." Those who knew "the young West Indian," as he was called, recognized something extraordinary in him, and vaguely speculated about his promising future.

The colonies were now deeply stirred over their relations with England. The Revolutionary storm was gathering fast. Which side of the conflict was the promising young collegian to espouse? His inclinations were at first on the side of Great Britain; but it was not long "until he became convinced," to use his own words, "by the superior force of the arguments in favor of the colonial claims." Perhaps he instinctively felt, or with keen penetration discerned, that the eminence to which he aspired lay on the colonial side. An occasion was soon offered to embark in the patriot cause. A mass-meeting was held in July, 1774, to urge New York, which was in possession of the Tories, to take its place along with the other colonies in resisting British aggression. Hamilton was present; and not satisfied with the presentation of the colonial cause in the speeches already delivered, he made his way to the stand, and after a few moments of embarrassment and hesitation, he

astonished and captivated the crowd by an extraordinary outburst of youthful oratory.

During the Revolutionary Period public opinion was largely influenced by political pamphlets and elaborate discussions in the newspapers. Hamilton was soon introduced into this species of controversy, for which his natural abilities fitted him in an eminent degree. In the discussion of political and constitutional questions he had no superior. In 1774 there appeared two ably written tracts that attacked the Continental Congress, and did the patriot cause considerable harm. To counteract their influence, Hamilton wrote two pamphlets in reply; and so ably did he vindicate the claims of the colonies, that in spite of his youth he at once took rank as a leader among the patriots.

Once fairly enlisted in the cause of American liberty, Hamilton's fiery nature made him active and aggressive. By pen and voice he continued to mould public opinion. But his ardor never betrayed him into rashness. His love of order and justice restrained him from inconsiderate violence. He even risked his life and (what was perhaps more to him) his reputation with the people, in resisting the madness of a mob. When the British ship of war *Asia* opened fire on New York, a mob thronged the streets, threatening destruction to every Tory. Dr. Cooper, the president of the college, was one of the most prominent adherents of the crown; and thither the crowd rushed, bent upon mischief. But Hamilton already stood on the steps of the building, and arrested the tumultuous throng with his vigorous expostulations.

But Hamilton's efforts in behalf of the colonies were not confined to words. After the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, it became increasingly evident that a peaceful solution of the controversy with Great Britain was no longer possible. In preparation for the inevitable appeal to arms, Hamilton studied military science, and to gain practical experience joined a company of volunteers. In several trying situations he displayed unflinching courage. In 1776 the New York

convention ordered the organization of an artillery company. Hamilton made application for the command, and established his fitness by a successful examination. He rapidly recruited his company, and expended of his own means to equip it. By constant drill he brought it to a high degree of efficiency. At the battle of Long Island and of White Plains his battery rendered effective service. At the end of six months Hamilton had won the reputation of a brave and brilliant officer.

The ability of Hamilton did not escape the attention of the commander-in-chief. Accordingly, in March, 1777, he was appointed a member of Washington's staff, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. During the next four years he was intimately associated with the commanding general, and in various capacities rendered him valuable aid. His chief duty, however, was the conduct of Washington's large correspondence. For this work his great natural gifts, as well as his previous training, peculiarly fitted him. A large part of the letters and proclamations issuing from headquarters at this time were the work of Hamilton. No doubt the great commander indicated their substance; but their admirable form was due, in part at least, to the skill of his able secretary.

But Hamilton's connection with Washington's staff came to an abrupt and unexpected end in February, 1781. Having been sent for by the commander-in-chief, he failed to respond promptly to the summons. When he made his appearance, after a brief delay, he was sharply reproved by Washington, who charged him with disrespect. The rebuke touched Hamilton's high-strung nature, and he replied: "I am not conscious of it, Sir; but since you have thought it, we part." Under all the circumstances it seems difficult to justify this outburst of the youthful aide. But he never liked the office of an aide-de-camp; and there is reason to believe that he was irritated because he had not been preferred to more important posts to which he aspired. Though he rejected Washington's overtures looking to a restoration of their former relations, he continued to serve in the army with the rank of colonel, and at

Yorktown he led an assault upon a British redoubt with resistless impetuosity.

Hamilton was never popular with the masses. His positive and aggressive character raised him above the low arts of the demagogue. He preferred to guide rather than to flatter the people. But he was never without loyal friends. His extraordinary force of character made him a centre of attraction for less positive natures. While his natural gifts made him a recognized leader, his generous nature inspired a loyal devotion. He was popular with his associates in the army; and the French officers especially, whose language he spoke with native fluency, regarded him with enthusiastic affection.

Whether under favorable circumstances Hamilton would have made a great general must remain a matter of speculation. But war was not the sphere for which his talents were best adapted. He was eminently gifted to be a statesman; and while in active service in the army, he could not refrain from considering the political and financial needs of the country, and from suggesting a remedy for existing evils. In 1780 he addressed to Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, an anonymous letter, which is noted for the penetration with which it treats of the financial difficulties of the colonies.

But Hamilton's thirst for military and civic glory did not prevent him from falling in love. There is no security against the shafts of Cupid but flight. On Dec. 14, 1780, he married Miss Elizabeth Schuyler, daughter of General Schuyler, and a charming and intelligent woman. Apart from the domestic happiness it brought him, the marriage allied him to an old, wealthy, and influential family. The only fortune Hamilton brought his bride was his brilliant talents and growing reputation; but when his father-in-law generously offered him financial aid, he proudly declined to receive it. Conscious of his abilities, he felt able to make his way in the world alone. After leaving the army he entered upon the study of law, and after a brief course he was admitted to the bar in 1782. His strong logical mind and his great force of character fitted him

to achieve distinction in the legal profession. But his country had need of his services in a different and higher sphere.

In November, 1782, he took his seat in Congress. That body had sadly declined in ability and prestige. It was incapable of grappling with the serious problems that presented themselves, and the country seemed to be rapidly drifting to destruction. No longer held together by a sense of common danger, the Confederation was on the point of disintegrating. There was no adequate revenue; the debts of the government were unprovided for; and the army was about to be disbanded without receiving its long arrears of pay. Hamilton made strenuous efforts to correct these evils. He advocated the levying of a duty on imports; set forth the necessity of maintaining the public credit and public honor; and urged a just and generous treatment of the army that had achieved American independence. But his efforts were in vain. The pusillanimous body could not rise equal to the situation. Local interests and jealousies prevailed over broad and patriotic sentiments. Hamilton's career in Congress was not, however, without important results. It increased his reputation as a patriotic statesman, and also excited that distrust in democratic institutions that ever afterwards made him an advocate of a strongly centralized and, as some claimed, a monarchical form of government.

Hamilton's greatest service followed the adoption of the Constitution by the convention. Though he was not thoroughly satisfied with it, he gave it his hearty support as the best thing attainable under existing conditions, and as a great improvement on the Articles of Confederation. In New York, as in the other States, there was a strong sentiment against the Constitution. The opposition was thoroughly organized and ably led. As a part of the plan to prevent the ratification of the Constitution, it was attacked in a series of elaborate and well-planned essays. This was a field in which Hamilton was well-nigh matchless. He accepted the challenge, and with the assistance of Madison and Jay he prepared that powerful series

of eighty-five essays forming the "Federalist." The effect was immediate and far-reaching. The "Federalist" did more than any other writing to secure the adoption and support of the Constitution throughout the country. It is a profound disquisition on the principles of our government, and has since been quoted as of the highest authority on constitutional questions.

But it is more than a political and controversial treatise. Its masterly style raises it to the rank of real literature. Most of the controversial writings of the Revolutionary Period have been forgotten. Having served their temporary purpose, they have been swept into oblivion. But the "Federalist" endures as one of the masterpieces of the human reason. Its sustained power is wonderful. The argument, clothed in elevated, strong, and sometimes eloquent language, moves forward with a mighty momentum that sweeps away everything before it. It is hardly surpassed in the literature of the world as a model of masterful popular reasoning. By this production Hamilton won for himself a foremost place in the literature of his time.

But the "Federalist" was not the only service he rendered the Constitution. It was chiefly through his able leadership that the New York convention adopted the Constitution. The result was one of the most noted triumphs ever achieved in a deliberative body. When the convention assembled, the Clintonian or Anti-Federalist party had forty-six out of sixty-five votes. "Two-thirds of the convention," wrote Hamilton, "and four-sevenths of the people, are against us." In spite of the great odds against him, he entered into the contest with resolute purpose. The Anti-Federalists employed every artifice known to parliamentary tactics to delay and defeat ratification. Day after day the battle raged. Hamilton was constantly on his feet, defending, explaining, and advocating the Constitution. His mastery of the subject was complete; and gradually his cogent and eloquent reasoning overcame partisan prejudice. "At length Hamilton arose in the convention, and stating that Virginia had ratified the Constitution, and

that the Union was thereby an accomplished fact, moved that they cease their contentions, and add New York to the new empire of Republican States." The vote was taken, and the Constitution adopted.

The new government was organized early in 1789; and upon the establishment of the Treasury Department in September, Hamilton was called by Washington to take charge of it. His practical wisdom never shone to better advantage. As Secretary of the Treasury, he left his impress upon the institutions of his country. He gave to the Treasury Department the organization it has since substantially retained. He was, perhaps, the master-spirit in putting the new government into practical operation.

The opposition to Hamilton's policy, which constantly aimed at strengthening the national government, at length took form as the Republican or Democratic party. Jefferson naturally became its head. Intensely republican at heart, he had come to entertain exaggerated, and even morbid, views concerning what he believed to be the monarchical aims of the Federalists. As a patriot and leader, he felt it his duty to arrest as far as possible this centralizing tendency. His relations with Hamilton in the cabinet, to use his own phrase, suggested the attitude of "two cocks in a pit." The feud at length grew beyond Washington's power of conciliation, and Jefferson finally withdrew from the cabinet.

It is impossible, within the narrow limits of this sketch, to follow Hamilton through all the labors and controversies of his political career. He sometimes made mistakes, as in supporting the odious Alien and Sedition Laws; but beyond all question he stood among the foremost statesmen of his time. By some he is assigned the highest place. "There is not in the Constitution of the United States," says Guizot, "an element of order, of force, of duration, which he did not powerfully contribute to introduce into it, and to cause to predominate." Tallyrand, who saw Hamilton in New York, said: "I consider Napoleon, Fox, and Hamilton the three greatest

men of our epoch, and without hesitation I award the first place to Hamilton." His official integrity, though, alas! not his moral character, was unsullied. The investigation of his conduct as Secretary of the Treasury, set on foot by his enemies in Congress, recoiled upon their own heads.

After serving nearly six years in Washington's cabinet, he retired in 1795 to private life, to gain an adequate support for his family. He resumed the practice of his profession in New York. His brilliant abilities and distinguished public services immediately brought him an extensive practice. He speedily rose to the head of the bar. His legal acumen was profound, while his clear thought, copious and forcible language, and passionate energy of will, gave him great power as an advocate.

But the end was drawing near. His brilliant career was cut short by the requirements of a false and barbarous "code of honor." Hamilton did not allow his professional labors to destroy his interest in public affairs. He continued the leader of the Federalist party, not only in his adopted State, but in the country at large. In the political contests of New York, his principal opponent was Aaron Burr, a brilliant but unprincipled man. Hamilton had twice thwarted Burr's political ambition. When at last he brought about the latter's defeat for the governorship of New York, Burr resolved upon a deadly revenge. He sought a quarrel with Hamilton, and then challenged him. The duel was fought at Weehawken, July 11, 1804. At the first fire Hamilton fell mortally wounded, discharging his pistol in the air. His death caused an outburst of sorrow and indignation that has scarcely been surpassed in the history of our country.

In person Hamilton was considerably under size. But there was a force in his personality, a fire in his impassioned eye, that made him impressive. He was one of the most effective speakers of his time. In his social relations he was genial, high-spirited, and generous. He was idolized by his family. Though he was never popular with the masses, whom he distrusted, he had the power of surrounding himself with a

band of able and loyal followers. He was a great constructive thinker—a leader of leaders. In the judgment of his rival Jefferson, he was “of acute understanding, disinterested, honest, and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life.” Chancellor Kent pays a tribute to “his profound penetration, his power of analysis, the comprehensive grasp and strength of his understanding, and the firmness, frankness, and integrity of his character.” Like all great men, perhaps, Hamilton was conscious of his power; and at times it made him self-assertive and dictatorial. He relied for success, not upon treacherous diplomacy, but upon open methods, and, if need be, upon hard fighting. He possessed extraordinary versatility of genius; and he was at once a brilliant officer, a powerful writer, an able lawyer, a great financier, a strong party leader, and a wise statesman.

FIRST NATIONAL PERIOD.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

WASHINGTON IRVING.
JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.
EDGAR ALLAN POE.
RALPH WALDO EMERSON.
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

OTHER PROMINENT WRITERS.

- WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780-1842). Preacher, lecturer, and Unitarian leader. "Life and Character of Napoleon Bonaparte," "Milton," and "Self-Culture" are his best productions.
- AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT (1799-1888). Educator and philosopher. Among his works are "Concord Days," and "Table Talk."
- HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862). A recluse and observer of nature. Author of "Walden; or, Life in the Woods," "Cape Cod," "The Maine Woods," etc.
- MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI (1810-1850). Editor of the *Dial*, and author of "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," and "Papers on Literature and Art."
- JAMES K. PAULDING (1779-1860). Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren, and author of "Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan," and "The Dutchman's Fireside," a novel.
- JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE (1795-1820). Author of "The Culprit Fay," a poem of considerable merit, and the well-known lyric, "The American

Flag." A friend of Fitz-Greene Halleck, with whom he worked for a time in literary partnership.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790-1867). Author of a long poem called "Fanny," and the stirring lyric, "Marco Bozzaris." On the death of his friend Drake he wrote the beautiful elegy beginning:—

"Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise."

SAMUEL WOODWORTH (1786-1842). Publisher, prose writer, and poet. One of the founders of *The New York Mirror*, long the most popular literary journal in this country. Author of an "Account of the War with Great Britain," and a volume of "Poems, Odes, and Songs," the most popular of which is "The Old Oaken Bucket."

ALEXANDER H. EVERETT (1791-1847). Diplomatist and prose writer. Ambassador at The Hague in 1818, and at Madrid in 1825. For several years editor and proprietor of *The North American Review*. His principal works are "Europe," "America," and "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays."

EDWARD EVERETT (1794-1865). Editor of *The North American Review*, member of Congress, Governor of Massachusetts, Minister at the Court of Saint James, President of Harvard College, and Secretary of State. Principal works, "A Defence of Christianity," and "Orations and Speeches on Various Occasions."

WILLIAM WARE (1797-1852). Unitarian minister, lecturer, editor of the *Christian Examiner*, and historical novelist. Principal works, "Zenobia," originally published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, "Aurelian," describing Rome in the third century, and "Julian, or Scenes in Judea," in which the most striking incidents in the life of Jesus are described.

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL (1795-1856). Scientist, scholar, and poet. Professor of Chemistry at West Point, and State Geologist of Wisconsin. Assisted Noah Webster in revising his large dictionary. Published several volumes of poetry, the last and best-known of which is entitled "The Dream of Day and Other Poems."

SARAH JOSEPHIA HALE (1790-1879). Poet, prose writer, and editor. Edited the *Ladies' Magazine* in Boston from 1828 to 1837, the first periodical in this country devoted exclusively to woman, and afterwards combined with *Godcy's Lady's Book* of Philadelphia. Principal

works, "The Genius of Oblivion and Other Poems," "Northwood, a Tale," "Sketches of American Character," "Traits of American Life," and "Woman's Record."

CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK (1789-1867). Educator and novelist. She conducted a school for young ladies for fifty years. Among her novels are "A New England Tale," "Redwood," reprinted in England, and translated into several Continental languages, "Hope Leslie," "Clarence," and "The Linwoods."

LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY (1791-1865). Writer of both prose and poetry; well described as "the American Hemans." Among her works are "Traits of the Aborigines of America," a poem in five cantos, "A Sketch of Connecticut Forty Years Since," "Poems," "Letters to Young Ladies," etc.

LYDIA MARIA CHILD (1802-1880). Editor and prose writer. Among her numerous writings may be mentioned "Hobomok, an Indian Story," "The Rebels," a tale of the American Revolution, "History of the Condition of Women in All Ages and Nations," "Looking Toward Sunset," and "The Romance of the Republic."

GEORGE P. MORRIS (1802-1864). Journalist and poet. In 1823, with Samuel Woodworth, he established *The New York Mirror*. Among his works are "The Deserted Bride, and Other Poems," "The Whippoorwill, a Poem," "American Melodies," and, in conjunction with Willis, "The Prose and Poetry of Europe and America." "Woodman, Spare that Tree" is his most popular piece.

NATHANIEL P. WILLIS (1806-1867). Editor of *The Mirror*, and author of poems of much excellence on Scriptural themes.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806-1870). One of the best Southern novelists, author of "The Yemassee," "The Partisan," and "Beauchampe."

JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY (1795-1870). Secretary of the Navy under Fillmore, and author of old-time society novels, among which are "Swallow Barn" and "Horse-Shoe Robinson."

RICHARD HENRY WILDE (1789-1847). Member of Congress from Georgia, author of a "Life of Tasso," and the beautiful lyric, "My Life is Like the Summer Rose."

WASHINGTON ALLSTON (1779-1843). Painter, poet, and prose writer; author of the poem "The Sylphs of the Seasons," and the art-novel "Monaldi." His "Lectures on Art" appeared after his death.

RICHARD HENRY DANA (1787-1879). Poet, editor, and prose writer; author of the "Buccaneer," and other poems, and for several years connected with the *North American Review*.

SAMUEL G. GOODRICH (1793-1860). Publisher and author, best known as "Peter Parley." He wrote a series of books for children, which extended through more than a hundred volumes. Among his works are "The Outcast and Other Poems," "Fireside Education," "Illustrated Natural History."

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT (1796-1859). Author of standard histories on Spanish themes: "History of Ferdinand and Isabella," "Conquest of Mexico," "Conquest of Peru," and "Philip the Second."

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY (1814-1877). Author of an admirable series of historical works relating to Holland: "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," "The History of the United Netherlands," and "Life of John of Barneveld."

GEORGE BANCROFT (1800-1891). Author of a standard, comprehensive "History of the United States" down to 1789.

RICHARD HILDRETH (1807-1865). Lawyer, editor, and author of a comprehensive "History of the United States," ending with the first presidential term of James Monroe.

JAMES GORHAM PALFREY (1796-1881). Author of an extended "History of New England."

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD (1812-1850). Poet and magazine writer. A volume of poems, "A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England," was much admired in its day. "Mrs. Osgood," wrote Poe, "has a rich fancy, — even a rich imagination, — a scrupulous taste, a faultless style, and an ear finely attuned to the delicacies of melody."

JOHN GODFREY SAXE (1816-1887). Journalist and poet. In rank, next to Holmes in humorous poetry. The titles of his successive works are "The Money King and Other Poems," "Clever Stories of Many Nations," "The Masquerade," "Fables and Legends of Many Countries," "The Proud Miss McBride," and "Leisure Day Rhymes."

JAMES T. FIELDS (1817-1881). Publisher, editor, and author. Edited the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1861 to 1871. Besides several volumes of poetry, he wrote "Yesterdays with Authors," and "Underbrush."

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892). Printer, school-teacher, carpenter, and poet. Principal work, "Leaves of Grass." By some assigned a very high rank; by others scarcely regarded as a poet at all. He is highly

appreciated in England, and his pieces have been translated into several modern languages.

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ (1822-1872). Painter and poet. His first volume of "Poems" appeared in 1847. Other works are "The Female Poets of America," "The New Pastoral," "The Wagoner of the Alleghanies." His most popular poem is "Sheridan's Ride," though poetically inferior to "Drifting."

BENSON J. LOSSING (1813-1892). Biographer and historian. Among his numerous works are "Life of Washington," "Field-Book of the Revolution," and "Pictorial History of the United States."

JACOB ABBOTT (1803-1879). A voluminous author of books designed for the young. Among his works are the "Rollo Books" (28 vols.), "The Lucy Books" (6 vols.), and "Harper's Story-Books" (36 vols.).

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT (1805-1877). Brother of Jacob Abbott, and, like him, a minister. Author of moral and historical works, the latter being characterized by a partisan tone. Noteworthy are "History of Napoleon Bonaparte," "Napoleon at Saint Helena," "The French Revolution of 1789," etc.

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825-1878). Traveller, poet, and novelist. Among his best works are "Views Afoot," "Byways of Europe," "Lars; a Pastoral of Norway," "Masque of the Gods," "Prince Deukalion," "Song of the Camp," translation of Goethe's "Faust," "Story of Kennett," and "Hannah Thurston."

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819-1881). Poet, novelist, and editor. His longest poems are "Katrina" and "Bitter-Sweet;" his best novels are "Miss Gilbert's Career," "Arthur Bonnicastle," and "The Story of Sevenoaks;" for a number of years editor of *Scribner's Monthly*.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (1812-1896). Author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the most widely read of American books, "The Minister's Wooing," "The Pearl of Orr's Island," "Oldtown Folks," etc.

FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823-1893). Eminent historian, who wrote a number of volumes under the general title, "France and England in North America."

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824-1892). Editor, essayist, and novelist. Principal works are "Prue and I," "Trumps," and "Potiphar Papers."

IV.

FIRST NATIONAL PERIOD.

(1815-1861.)

THE First National Period extends from the close of the War of 1812 to the beginning of the Civil War. It covers nearly half a century, and exhibits great national expansion. The arduous tasks imposed upon the people during the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods were successfully achieved. The dreams of our forefathers began to be realized. "America," says Hegel, "is the land of the future, where in the ages that lie before us the burden of the world's history shall reveal itself." During the period under consideration it made a long stride toward its coming greatness.

With the establishment of peace in 1815, the United States entered upon an unparalleled era of prosperity. The development of the country went forward with great rapidity. An increasing tide of immigration, chiefly from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany, swept to our shores. Of kindred blood, the great body of immigrants readily adjusted themselves to their new surroundings, and vigorously joined with our native-born people in developing the agricultural, mineral, and industrial resources of our country. The population increased from 8,438,000 in 1815 to 32,000,000 in 1861, thus equalling the leading nations of Europe.

The great valley of the Mississippi was occupied. Its fertility made it one of the most favored agricultural regions in the world. The invention of agricultural machinery made it possible to harvest immense crops of wheat and corn, for which a market was found in Europe. Trade and manufactures naturally attended upon agriculture ; and, as a result, flourishing towns and cities sprang up with unexampled rapidity. Cincinnati grew from a town of 5,000 in 1815 to a city of 161,000 in 1860, while the growth of St. Louis and Chicago was still more phenomenal.

The Atlantic States showed a development no less remarkable. The frontier, carried beyond the Mississippi, made the toils and dangers of border life a tradition. The invention of the steam-engine gave a new impulse to commerce and manufacture. In addition to excellent highways, railroads traversed the country in all directions. The New England States developed large manufacturing interests. The seaboard cities grew in size, wealth, and culture. Baltimore increased from 49,000 in 1815 to 212,000 in 1860. Within the same period, Boston increased from 38,000 to 177,000 ; Philadelphia from 100,000 to 508,000 ; and New York from 100,000 to 813,000.

The intellectual culture of the people kept pace with their material expansion. The public-school system was extended from New England throughout the free States. In the West liberal appropriations of land were made for their support. Gradually the courses of study and the methods of instruction were improved through the efforts of intelligent educators like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. Schools of secondary education were founded in all parts of the country. No fewer than one hundred and forty-nine colleges were established between 1815 and

1861. These institutions, liberally supported by denominational zeal or by private munificence, became centres of literary culture. Harvard College exerted an astonishing influence. Between 1821 and 1831 it graduated Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Sumner, Phillips, Motley, and Thoreau. Bancroft and Prescott were graduated at an earlier date. Longfellow, though a graduate of Bowdoin, for some years filled the chair of Modern Languages. This list, as will be seen, contains a number of the most honored names in American literature.

The periodical press became a powerful agency in the diffusion of knowledge. In no other country, perhaps, has greater enterprise been shown in periodical literature than in America. Our newspapers, as a rule, show more energy, and our magazines more taste, than those of Europe. In 1860 there were 4,051 papers and periodicals, circulating annually 927,951,000 copies, an average of thirty-four copies for each man, woman, and child in the country. They gradually rose in excellence, and stimulated literary production. A few of our ablest writers, Bryant, Poe, Whittier, and Lowell, served as editors. The *North American Review*, which was founded in 1815, numbered among its contributors nearly every writer of prominence in the First National Period.

As the foregoing considerations show, our country now, for the first time, presented conditions favorable to the production of general literature. The stress of the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods was removed, and the intellectual energies of the people were freer to engage in the arts of peace. The growing wealth of the country brought the leisure and culture that create, to a greater or less degree, a demand for the higher forms of literature.

The large cities became literary centres. Large publishing-houses were established. Under these circumstances it is not strange that there appeared writers in poetry, fiction, and history who attained a high degree of excellence. Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Bancroft, Prescott, and others are names that reflect credit upon their country.

It will be noticed that nearly all the great writers of this period were from New England. It was there that the conditions were most favorable. The West was still too new for much literary activity. Like the early colonists, the people were engaged in the great task of subduing an untamed country. In the South the social conditions were not favorable to literature. Slavery retarded the intellectual as well as the material development of the Southern States. It checked manufacture, and turned immigration westward. Manual labor contracted a fatal taint from slavery. While the slaveholding class were generally intelligent, and often highly cultured, the rest of the white population were comparatively illiterate. The public-school system, regarded as unfavorable to the existing social relations, was not adopted. The energies of the dominant class were devoted to politics rather than to literature. Thus, while the South had great debaters and orators, like Calhoun and Clay, it did not, during this period, produce a single writer of eminence.

So far our inquiry has sought an explanation of the literary activity of this period. The general causes, as in every period of literary bloom, are sufficiently patent. We may now examine the influences that gave literature its distinctive character as contrasted with that of the preceding periods. The result will not be without interest.

The period under consideration witnessed a wonderful stride in the march of human progress. There was a renaissance, based not on a restoration of ancient literature, but upon invention and science. It was not confined to any one country, but extended throughout the Christian world. It is not necessary to enumerate the various inventions which in a few decades revolutionized the entire system of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce. The drudgery of life was greatly relieved, the products of human industry were vastly increased, and the comforts of life largely multiplied. The nations of the earth were drawn closer together, and the intellectual horizon was extended until it embraced, not a single province, but the civilized world.

But the period was distinguished scarcely less by its spirit of scientific inquiry. Emancipating themselves largely from the authority of tradition, men learned to look upon the world for themselves. Patient toilers carefully accumulated facts upon which to base their conclusions. All the natural sciences were wonderfully expanded. The origin of man, the history of the past, the laws of society, were all brought under new and searching investigation. As a result of all this scientific inquiry, a flood of light was shed upon the principal problems of nature and life. Christendom was lifted to a higher plane of intelligence than it had ever reached before.

This general renaissance produced a corresponding change in literature. It enriched literature with new treasures of truth. It taught men to look upon the universe in a different way. Literary activity was stimulated, and both poetry and prose were cultivated to an extraordinary degree. New forms of literature were devised to

hold the rich fruitage everywhere at hand. The frigid classicism of the age of Pope was abandoned as artificial and inadequate. The creative impulse of genius demanded untrammelled freedom. The essay acquired a new importance. History was suffused with a philosophic spirit that gave it greater depth. Fiction entered a broader field, and while ministering to pleasure, became the handmaid of history, science, and social philosophy.

The effect of this renaissance was felt in America largely by reflection. The literary expansion we have been considering went forward more rapidly in the British Isles than in the United States. It had already begun there, while the people of this country were still struggling with the great problems of political independence and national government. Before the close of the Revolutionary period here, Cowper and Burns had given a new direction to poetry in Great Britain. During the period under consideration, there arose in England and Scotland a group of able writers who were pervaded by the modern spirit, and who, to a greater or less degree, influenced contemporary literature in America. Scott wrote his masterful historical novels. Wordsworth interpreted the inaudible voices of mountain, field, and sky. Byron poured forth his eloquent descriptions, irreverent satire, and sombre misanthropy. Carlyle and Macaulay infused new life into history and essay. Dickens and Thackeray held up the mirror to various phases of social life. Coleridge interpreted to England the profound thoughts of German philosophy. The *Edinburgh Review*, founded by Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, and Henry Brougham, exercised its lordly dominion in the realm of letters.

During the First National Period, there were two po-

litical questions that exerted a considerable influence upon the literature of this country. These were State rights and slavery. At frequent intervals these questions came up to disturb the public peace. For half a century they were dealt with in a spirit of compromise. But the views held and the interests involved were too conflicting to be permanently settled without an appeal to force. The statesmen of the South generally maintained the doctrine of State rights. It was boldly proclaimed in the United States Senate that a State had the right, under certain circumstances, to nullify an act of Congress. In 1830 Webster attained the height of his forensic fame by his eloquent reply to Hayne on the doctrine of nullification.

The question of slavery was still more serious. It was closely interwoven with the social organization of the South. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 increased the demand for slave labor. The yield of cotton was rapidly increased from year to year, till in 1860 it reached the enormous figure of 2,054,698,800 pounds. Thus cotton became a source of great national wealth; and as a result, slavery was intrenched behind the commercial and selfish interests of a large and influential class in all parts of the country.

Nevertheless, there was a growing moral sentiment against slavery. It was felt to be a contradiction of the Declaration of Independence, and a violation of the natural rights of man. In 1830 William Lloyd Garrison began the publication of an antislavery paper called *The Liberator*, and with passionate zeal denounced a constitution that protected slavery, as "a league with death and a covenant with hell." The agitation for abolition was begun. In 1833 an antislavery society was formed. Whittier, Long-

fellow, Lowell, Phillips, and others lent the weight of their influence and the skill of their pens to the antislavery movement. Harriet Beecher Stowe exerted no small influence upon public sentiment in the North by "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a work in which the cruelties of slavery were graphically depicted. In a few years the abolition party became strong enough to enter national politics. The feeling between the North and the South became more pronounced and irreconcilable. Finally attempted secession precipitated a civil war, which resulted in the abolition of slavery, and the cementing of our country into a homogeneous and indissoluble union.

With the First National Period our literature assumed, to some extent at least, a distinctively American character. New themes, requiring original treatment, were presented to the literary worker. In the East, Indian life had become sufficiently remote to admit of idealistic treatment. In Cooper's works the Indian is idealized as much as the mediæval knight in the novels of Scott. The picturesque elements in pioneer life were more clearly discerned. The wild life of the frontiersman began to appear in fiction, which, possessing the charm of novelty, was cordially received abroad. In the older parts of the country, tradition lent a legendary charm to various localities and different events. The legends of the Indians were found to possess poetic elements. From these sources Irving, Longfellow, and Hawthorne drew the materials for some of their most original and popular works.

In the first half of the present century there were in New England two closely related movements that deserve mention for their important effect upon literature. The first of these was the Unitarian controversy. Though the

Unitarian doctrine is very old, and was held by a few New England churches in the eighteenth century, the controversy began in 1805, when Henry Ware, a learned Unitarian, was elected professor of divinity in Harvard College. The capture of this leading institution by the Unitarians naturally provoked a theological conflict. The champions on the Unitarian side were Henry Ware, William Ellery Channing, and Andrews Norton; on the Trinitarian side, Leonard Woods, Moses Stuart, and Lyman Beecher. From 1815 to 1830 the discussion was the leading question of the time. Though conducted with great earnestness on both sides, the controversy was without that venomous character distinguished as *odium theologicum*. A large number of Congregational churches adopted the Unitarian belief. Emphasizing the moral duties rather than the doctrinal beliefs of Christianity, the Unitarians became very active in education, philanthropy, and reform. It is not too much to say that all the leading writers of New England felt the stimulating and liberalizing influence of the Unitarian movement.

The other movement referred to belongs to the sphere of philosophy, though it also affected religious belief. It has been characterized as *transcendentalism*. In spite of the levity with which the movement has sometimes been treated, it was an earnest protest against a materialistic philosophy, which teaches that the senses are our only source of knowledge. It was a reaction against what is dull, prosaic, and hard in every-day life. The central thing in transcendentalism is the belief that the human mind has the power to attain truth independently of the senses and the understanding. Emerson, himself a leading transcendentalist, defines it as follows: "What is

popularly called Transcendentalism among us is Idealism : Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists ; the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness ; the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say, the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell. The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances and the animal wants of man ; the idealist on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture."

This idealistic or transcendental philosophy did not originate in New England, though it received a special coloring and application there. It began in Germany with the writings of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling ; it was transported to England by Coleridge and Carlyle, through whose works it first made its way to America. It abounded in profound and fertile thought. It was taken up by a remarkable group of men and women in Boston and Concord, among whom were Emerson, Alcott, Thoreau, Parker, and Margaret Fuller. Their organ (for every movement at that time had to have its periodical) was *The Dial*. Transcendentalism exerted an elevating influence upon New England thought, and gave to our literature one of its greatest writers in the person of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Contemporary with the transcendental movement, all sorts of novelties and projects of reform kept New England in a state of ferment. Spiritualism, phrenology, and mesmerism attracted much attention. Temperance, woman's rights, and socialism were all discussed in public gatherings and in the press. Many of these schemes,

which aimed at the regeneration of society, had the sympathy and encouragement of the transcendentalists. Some of their leading spirits participated in the Brook Farm experiment, which was based on the communistic teachings of Fourier. Though the experiment ended in failure, it gave the world Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance," in which the author utilized the observations made during his residence in the famous phalanstery.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

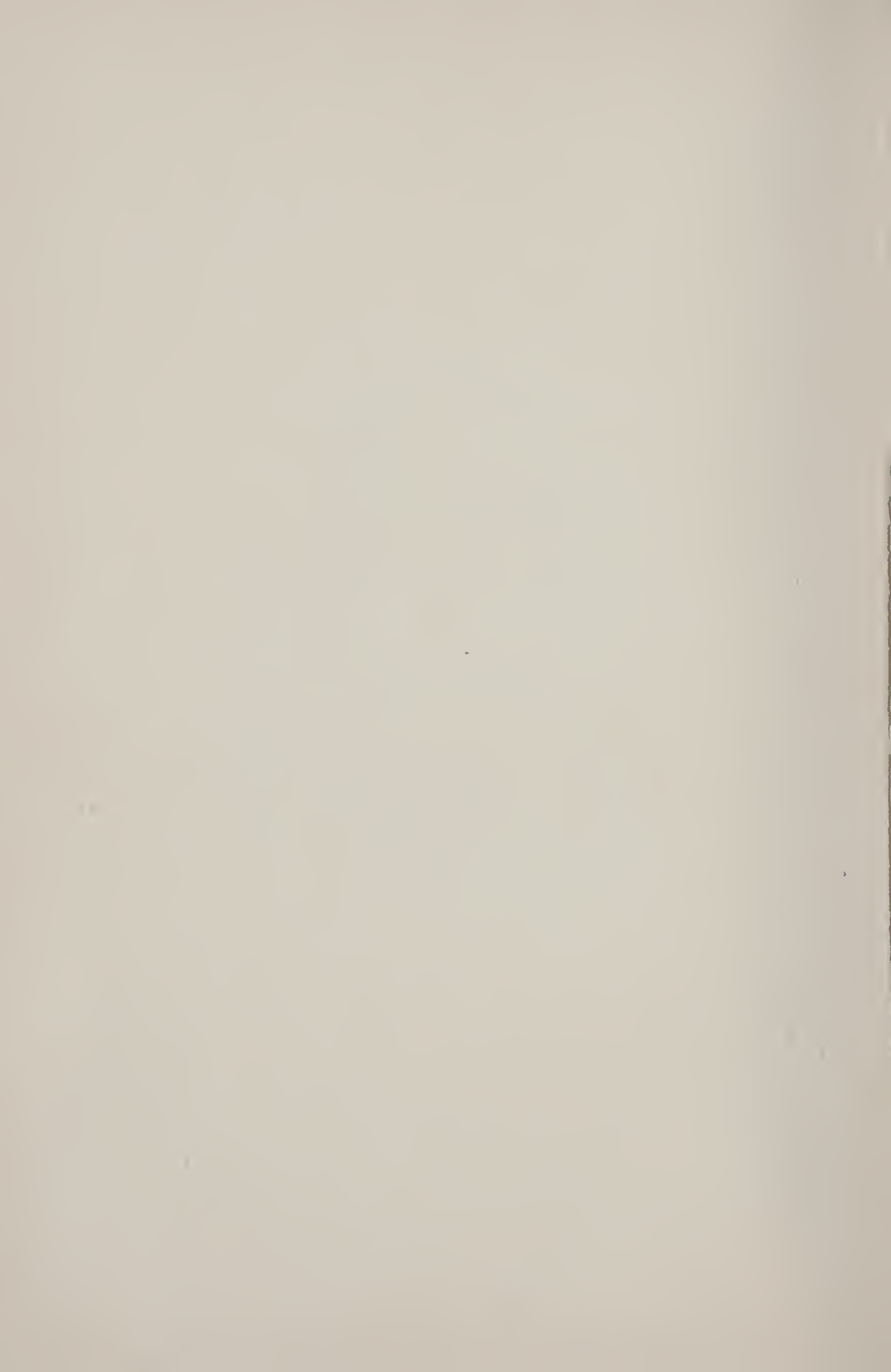
To Washington Irving belongs the distinction of being the first of our great writers in general literature. He was not a great theologian like Jonathan Edwards, nor a practical philosopher and moralist like Franklin, nor a statesman like Jefferson and Hamilton. He was above all a literary man; and his writings belong, in large measure at least, to the field of *belles-lettres*. In his most characteristic writings he aimed not so much at instruction as at entertainment. He achieved that finished excellence of form that at once elevates literature to the classic rank. He was the first American writer to gain general recognition abroad; or, to use Thackeray's words, "Irving was the first ambassador whom the New World of letters sent to the Old." Our literature has had many "ambassadors" since; but it is doubtful whether any other has ever been more cordially welcomed or more pleasantly remembered.

Washington Irving was born in the city of New York, April 3, 1783, the youngest of eleven children. The Revolutionary War was ended, and the American army occupied the city. "Washington's work is ended," said the mother, "and the child shall be named after him." Six years later, when Washington had become the first President of the young republic, a Scotch maid-servant of the Irving family one day followed him into a shop. "Please, your honor," said she, "here's a bairn was named after you." With grave dignity the President laid his hand on the child's head, and bestowed his blessing.

Not much can be said of young Irving's education. Like many another brilliant writer in English literature, he took



WASHINGTON IRVING.



but little interest in the prescribed courses of study. As was said of Shakespeare, he knew little Latin and less Greek. But it would be a mistake to suppose that his early years went unimproved. His literary bent asserted itself in the neglect of such studies as did not interest him. During his boyhood he was an eager reader. Books of poetry and travel were quickly devoured. The creative literary impulse was early manifested in the composition of verses and childish plays.

Two of his brothers had been sent to Columbia College. But his disinclination to methodical study deprived him of this privilege. Perhaps it was just as well; for his genius was left freer to pursue its own development. At sixteen he entered a law office; but from what has already been said, it will not appear strange that he neglected his law-books for works of literature. In 1798 he spent a part of his summer vacation in exploring with his gun the Sleepy Hollow region which he was afterwards to immortalize with the magic of his pen. At this period he showed symptoms of pulmonary weakness; and for several years he spent much time in out-door exercise, making excursions along the Hudson and the Mohawk. Though he did not at the time turn his experience to account in a literary way, he was all the while, perhaps unconsciously to himself, storing up materials for future use.

In 1804 it was thought that a voyage to Europe would be beneficial to his health. Accordingly he took passage for Bordeaux in a sailing-vessel. "There's a chap," said the captain to himself as young Irving went on board, "that will go overboard before we get across." But the gloomy prediction was not fulfilled; and after a voyage of six weeks—it was not the day of ocean greyhounds—he reached his destination much improved in health.

He visited in succession the principal cities of France and Italy. He had not yet found his vocation, and his life abroad appears sufficiently aimless. He gave free play to his large social nature, and to the ordinary observer he seemed a mere pleasure-seeker. But he was accomplishing more than he or

his friends understood. He made the acquaintance of many eminent persons, and his genial nature and pleasing manners made him welcome in the brilliant social circles to which he was introduced. He had an opportunity to study European society in all its phases. He added to his knowledge of English literature an acquaintance with the literatures of France and Italy. He was brought into sympathetic contact with the art and antiquities of Europe. He was one of the keenest observers. While thus storing his memory with knowledge afterwards to be invaluable to him, his culture was expanding into the breadth of cosmopolitan sympathies.

He met the inconveniences and discomforts inseparable from travel in those days with a truly philosophic spirit. "When I cannot get a dinner to suit my taste," he said, "I endeavor to get a taste to suit my dinner." He was no chronic grumbler. He made it a habit all through life to look on the pleasant side of things. "I endeavor," he said, "to be pleased with everything about me, and with the masters, mistresses, and servants of the inns, particularly when I perceive they have all the dispositions in the world to serve me; as Sterne says, 'It is enough for heaven and ought to be enough for me.'"

He did not carry with him in his travels the statesman's interest in the political condition of Europe. Politics were never to his taste. He preferred to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement, to loiter about the ruined castle, to lose himself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past. The pathetic constancy of Petrarch for Laura appealed to him more than the meteoric splendor of Napoleon.

In the course of his travels he visited Rome, where he met Washington Allston. The acquaintance for a time threatened to change the course of his life. Allston's enthusiasm for art proved contagious. The charm of the Italian landscape, the inestimable treasures of art in the city of the Cæsars, made a profound impression on Irving's refined and poetic sensibilities. For a time he thought of becoming a painter.

As we may clearly discern in his writings, he had an artistic eye for color and form. Had he adhered to this temporary purpose, it is possible that he might, like his friend and compatriot, have given us some admirable paintings. But it is well-nigh certain that the world would have been the loser; for what pictures could compensate for the loss of the "Sketch-Book," "Bracebridge Hall," and the "Tales of a Traveller"?

Irving returned to America in 1806, and was admitted to the bar. His legal attainments were slender, and his interest in his profession superficial. Instead of throwing his heart into it, he allowed much of his time and energy to be absorbed in social enjoyments. At this period he first gave decided indications of his future career. A strong literary instinct is irrepressible. In association with his brother William and James K. Paulding, he issued a semi-monthly periodical, entitled *Salmagundi*. It was an imitation of the *Spectator*, and aimed "simply to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." The writers veiled themselves in mystery. They affected utter indifference to either praise or blame, and with lofty superiority criticised the manners of the town. The wit and humor were delightful, and from the start the paper had a flattering success. But after running through twenty numbers, it stopped in the midst of its success as suddenly as it had burst upon the astonished community.

It was almost inevitable that Irving should be drawn into politics. With no taste for law, he found it tedious waiting for clients who never came. Local politics seemed to present an inviting field; but a brief experience was enough. He toiled "through the purgatory" of one election. He got through the first two days pretty well. Among his new associates he kept on the lookout for "whim, character, and absurdity." Then the duties of a ward politician began to pall upon him. Referring with characteristic humor to his unsavory experience, he wrote: "I shall not be able to bear the smell of small beer and tobacco for a month to come."

Irving early had his romance, and it makes the most pathetic incident in his life. He formed a deep attachment for Matilda Hoffman, a young lady of great personal charm. His love was as ardently returned. But before the wedding-day arrived, she fell sick and died. He never entirely recovered from this loss, which seems to have tinged his character ever afterwards with a gentle melancholy. With a constancy as beautiful as it is rare, he remained faithful to his first love throughout life.

It was while burdened with a sense of his irreparable loss that he completed the work that was to make him famous. This was "Knickerbocker's History of New York." It is a humorous treatment of the traditions and customs belonging to the period of the Dutch domination. The personal characteristics of the phlegmatic Dutch governors, and the leading events in the early history of the city, are treated in a delightful, mock-heroic vein. The work was received with almost universal acclaim. It became a household word. After a lapse of forty years, Irving tells us that he found New Yorkers of Dutch descent priding themselves on being "genuine Knickerbockers."

The next five years of Irving's life were neither very serious nor very fruitful. Though so strongly drawn to literature that he was scarcely fit for anything else, he was afraid to adopt a literary career. He entered into a mercantile partnership with his brothers, in which he was required to do but little work. In the interests of the firm, when Congress threatened some legislation unfavorable to importing merchants, he made a visit to Washington. But there, as well as in Philadelphia and Baltimore, social pleasures occupied him more than the action of Congress. He steadily refused to look on the darker side of human nature or human life. He would not believe that wisdom consists in a knowledge of the wickedness of men, and confessed that he entertained "a most melancholy good opinion and good will for the great mass of my fellow-creatures."

While in Washington he saw a good deal of the leading

men of the country. Though his sympathies were with the Federalists, he was not a violent partisan. He was far too broad-minded to become a bigot in either religion or politics. He was on good terms with the leaders of both political parties, and laughed equally at their extravagance. "One day," he writes, "I am dining with a knot of honest, furious Federalists, who are damning all their opponents as a set of consummate scoundrels, panders to Bonaparte, etc. The next day I dine, perhaps, with some of the very men I have heard thus anathematized, and find them equally honest, warm, and indignant; and, if I take their word for it, I had been dining the day before with some of the greatest knaves in the nation, men absolutely paid and suborned by the British government."

For a time the business of his brothers (they were importers of hardware and cutlery) required his services at the store pretty constantly. The work was distasteful to him beyond measure. "By all the martyrs of Grub Street," he exclaimed, "I'd sooner live in a garret, and starve into the bargain, than follow so sordid, dusty, and soul-killing a way of life, though certain it would make me as rich as old Cræsus, or John Jacob Astor himself." He became editor of a periodical called *Select Reviews*, for which he wrote some biographies and sketches, a few of which afterwards appeared in the "Sketch Book." But he soon grew tired of his position, for he had an invincible aversion to regular work.

The year the second war with Great Britain closed, Irving sailed for Europe, where the next seventeen years of his life were spent,—years rich in experience and literary activity. It was during this period that a number of his choicest works were produced. His reputation as the author of "Knickerbocker" made him a welcome guest in literary circles. In London he dined at Murray's, where he met some of the notable writers of the day. He was cordially received at Edinburgh; and he spent some days with Scott, of whose home and habits he has given so delightful a description in "Abbotsford."

As we should naturally expect, Irving was a great admirer of Isaac Walton. He made more than one visit to the haunts of the illustrious angler. On one occasion he wandered by the banks of the romantic Dove in company with a "lovely girl," who pointed out to him the beauties of the surrounding scenery, and repeated "in the most dulcet voice tracts of heaven-born poetry."

Upon the failure of the branch house of his brothers in Liverpool, he went to London to embark upon the literary career for which nature had so evidently intended him. He was urged by Scott to become editor of an anti-Jacobin periodical in Edinburgh. This he refused to do for two reasons already familiar to us, — his distaste for politics, and his aversion to regular literary work. He also declined an offer to become a contributor of the *London Quarterly*, with the liberal pay of one hundred guineas an article. "It has always been so hostile to my country," he said, "I cannot draw a pen in its service." This is the language of high-toned patriotism.

In 1819 he began the publication of the "Sketch-Book." It was written in England, and sent over to New York, where it was issued in octavo numbers. Some of them were reprinted in London without the author's consent; and to prevent the entire work from being pirated, Irving found it necessary to bring out an edition in England. After once declining it in the polite manner for which publishers have become noted, Murray was afterwards persuaded by Scott to bring out the work. He purchased the copyright for two hundred pounds, which, with noteworthy liberality, he subsequently raised to four hundred.

In comparing the "Sketch Book" with Irving's previous work, it is impossible not to perceive his intellectual development. He has acquired a greater depth of thought and feeling. His sympathies have gained in scope. His hand has acquired a more exquisite touch. As a natural result of the tribulations through which he had passed, a number of the sketches are tinged with sadness. In only two of them does

he give rein to his inimitable humor; but these two, "Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," will endure as long as the beautiful region with which they are associated. The "Sketch Book" exerted an important influence upon American literature. While stimulating our writers with the bright possibilities before them, it rendered henceforth inartistic or slovenly work intolerable.

The applause with which America greeted the appearance of the "Sketch Book" was echoed by England. Irving became the lion of the day. There seemed to be "a kind of conspiracy," as some one wrote at the time, "to hoist him over the heads of his contemporaries." But he was not elated by his success. Vanity is a vice of smaller souls. "I feel almost appalled by such success," he wrote to a friend, "and fearful that it cannot be real, or that it is not fully merited, or that I shall not act up to the expectations that may be formed."

In 1820 Irving made a visit to Paris, where his reputation secured him flattering recognition. Here he made the acquaintance of Thomas Moore, whom he characterized as a "noble-hearted, manly, spirited little fellow, with a mind as generous as his fancy is brilliant." A warm friendship sprang up between them. Irving found too many distractions in Paris to do much literary work. An eruptive malady, which appeared in his ankles and at intervals incapacitated him for walking, sometimes rendered literary composition difficult or impossible. Notwithstanding these hindrances he wrote "Bracebridge Hall," which was published in 1822, the year of his return to England. It is made up of a series of delightful sketches, chiefly descriptive of country life in England. He had traversed that country, as he tells us, "a grown-up child, delighted by every object, great and small." His delicate and genial observation caught much of the poetry, picturesqueness, and humor of English life. It shows the same exquisite workmanship that characterized the "Sketch Book;" and some of its stories, like "The Stout Gentleman," "Annette Delarbre," and "Dolph Heyleger," are models of brilliant and

effective narrative. It is significant of Irving's growing reputation that Murray paid a thousand pounds for the copyright.

After a visit to Dresden, where he found congenial society in an English family, and a trip to Prague, which still kept up "its warrior look," we find him in 1823 again in Paris. Its gayeties had an attraction for him. He worked at irregular intervals, for he was almost wholly dependent upon impulse or inspiration. When the inspiration was on him, he wrote very rapidly; and having once begun a book, he labored diligently till it was completed. The following year his "Tales of a Traveller" appeared, one of his most delightful books. Irving himself said that "there was more of an artistic touch about it, though this is not a thing to be appreciated by the many." He sold the copyright to Murray for fifteen hundred pounds, and, according to Moore, might have had two thousand; but it was no part of his genius to drive shrewd bargains.

But the time had now come for him to open a new vein. In 1826, at the invitation of Alexander H. Everett, United States Minister at Madrid, he went to the Spanish capital for the purpose of translating a recent collection of documents relating to the voyages of Columbus. He found a rich store of materials that had never been utilized, and resolved to write an independent work. The result was the publication in 1828 of his "Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus," a work of extensive research and admirable treatment. It was eagerly read, and Jeffrey declared that no work would ever supersede it. It at once gave Irving an honorable place among historians.

The "Conquest of Granada," the most interesting, perhaps, of his Spanish works, was closely related to the "Life of Columbus." It was while pursuing his researches for the latter work that he became interested in the stirring and romantic scenes connected with the overthrow of the Moorish dominion in Spain. Subsequently he made a tour of Andalusia, and visited the towns, fortresses, and mountain-passes that had been the scenes of the most remarkable events of the

war. He passed some time in the ancient palace of the Alhambra, the once favorite abode of the Moorish monarchs. With these scenes fresh in his mind, he wrote the "Conquest of Granada;" and though he allowed himself some freedom in its romantic coloring (for the subject appealed strongly to his imagination), he remained faithful to historical fact. It is a graphic and thrilling narrative of romantic events.

Of his other Spanish works — "The Alhambra," "Legends of the Conquest of Spain," and "Mahomet and his Successors" — it is not necessary to speak. The subjects were all eminently congenial to his mind, and susceptible of his peculiar felicity of treatment. They sustained, if they did not add to, his growing fame. Literary honors were bestowed upon him. In 1830 the Royal Society of Literature in England awarded him a gold medal; and the year following the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of LL.D., — a title which his modesty never permitted him to use.

In 1829 Irving left Spain, and served for some time as Secretary of Legation at the Court of St. James. It was a period of great social and political unrest in England and France; and, for once in his life, he took a keen interest in current events. He visited again many points of interest in England, and had the melancholy pleasure of seeing Scott in the sad eclipse of his powers.

In 1832, after an absence of seventeen years, he returned to his native land, and was accorded an enthusiastic welcome as its most distinguished representative in the world of letters. Nothing but his modest shrinking from publicity prevented a round of banquets in various cities. He was delighted to note the great progress the nation had made during his absence. To acquaint himself more fully with its resources and development, he visited different parts of the country. His "Tour on the Prairies" embodies the observations and experiences of a trip to the region beyond the Mississippi, still the haunt of the buffalo and wild Indian.

With his simple and quiet tastes, Irving now longed for

a home. Accordingly he purchased a little farm at a lovely spot on the Hudson, not far from the Sleepy Hollow he had immortalized. The house was remodelled, and the grounds arranged in exquisite taste. To this charming residence he gave the name of Sunnyside. He received under his roof a number of near relatives, including a half dozen nieces, for whom he showed an affection as tender as it was admirable. Henceforth Sunnyside became to him the dearest spot on earth; he always left it with reluctance, and returned to it with eagerness. It was here that the greater part of his life was spent after his return to America. Few persons have been happier in their surroundings.

The ten years succeeding his return to America were, upon the whole, delightful to him. He had seen enough of the world to relish the quiet of his picturesque home. He was honored as the leading American writer of his day. But more than that, he was esteemed for his excellence of character. It is hardly too much to say that he was the most prominent private citizen of the republic. Almost any political position to which he might have aspired was within his reach. But a public career was not to his taste. He declined to be a candidate for mayor of New York — which cost perhaps no great struggle. But a seat in Mr. Van Buren's cabinet as Secretary of the Navy was likewise declined. The life of a government officer in Washington possessed no attractions for him, and his sensitive nature shrank from the personal attacks to which prominent officials are exposed.

During the ten years under consideration, he was busy with his pen. He became a regular contributor to the *Knickerbocker Magazine* at a salary of two thousand dollars a year. In addition to the "Tour on the Prairies" already mentioned, he wrote "Abbotsford" and "Newstead Abbey" — admirable sketches of the homes of Scott and Byron. "Captain Bonneville" is a story of adventure in the far West. It describes in a very vivid way the wild, daring, reckless life of the hunter, trapper, and explorer. Among the literary schemes

of this period must be mentioned his contemplated history of the conquest of Mexico. It was a theme well suited to his talents, and his previous work on Spanish subjects fitted him for the task. He had collected a large amount of material, and composed the first chapter; but learning that Mr. Prescott desired to treat the subject, Irving magnanimously abandoned it. It was a great personal sacrifice. "I was dismounted from my *cheval de bataille*," he wrote years afterwards, "and have never been completely mounted since." In spite of Mr. Prescott's splendid work, we cannot help regretting that Irving gave up his cherished theme.

In 1842 the quiet but busy literary life of Irving was interrupted by his appointment as minister to Spain. The nomination was suggested by Webster. In the Senate, Clay, who was opposing nearly all of the President's appointments, exclaimed, "Ah, this is a nomination that everybody will concur in!" The appointment was confirmed almost by acclamation. The appointment was a surprise to Irving; and, while he could not be insensible to the honor, its acceptance cost him pain. It necessitated a protracted absence from his beloved Sunnyside. "It is hard, — very hard," he was heard murmuring to himself; "yet I must try to bear it."

There is not space to follow him in his diplomatic career. It was a turbulent period in Spain; but he discharged the somewhat difficult duties of his post, not only with fidelity, but also with ability. But the splendors of court life had lost their charm for him. From the pomp of the Spanish capital his heart fondly turned to his home on the Hudson. "I long to be once more back at dear little Sunnyside," he wrote in 1845, "while I have yet strength and good spirits to enjoy the simple pleasures of the country, and to rally a happy family group once more about me." He gave up his mission in 1846.

The year of his return to America he published his "Life of Goldsmith," which is one of the most charming biographies ever written. There was not a little in common between

Irving and Goldsmith. They had alike a tender and indulgent regard for the world; they had felt the same roving disposition; they possessed a similar mastery of exquisite English. "Perhaps it is significant of a deeper unity in character," to borrow a delightful touch from Charles Dudley Warner, "that both, at times, fancied they could please an intolerant world by attempting to play the flute." Irving's treatment of Goldsmith is exquisitely sympathetic. "Mahomet and his Successors" appeared in 1849, and is a popular rather than a profound treatise. Irving's greatest work in the department of history was his "Life of Washington." The last volume was published in 1859, shortly before his death. It was the work of his ripe old age, and is a masterpiece of biography. It is clear in its arrangement, admirable in its proportion, impartial in its judgments, and finished in its style.

The closing years of his life were serene and happy. He held a high place in the affection of his countrymen. He was surrounded by the quiet domestic joys that he loved so well. His labors on the life of the great hero whose name he had received three quarters of a century before were thoroughly congenial. Thus he lived on, retaining his kindly feeling for the world, till the death summons suddenly came, Nov. 28, 1859. Although he had reached an age beyond the usual period allotted to man, the tidings of his death were received throughout the country with profound sorrow. But grief was deepest among those who had known him most intimately. His unpretending neighbors and the little children wept around his grave.

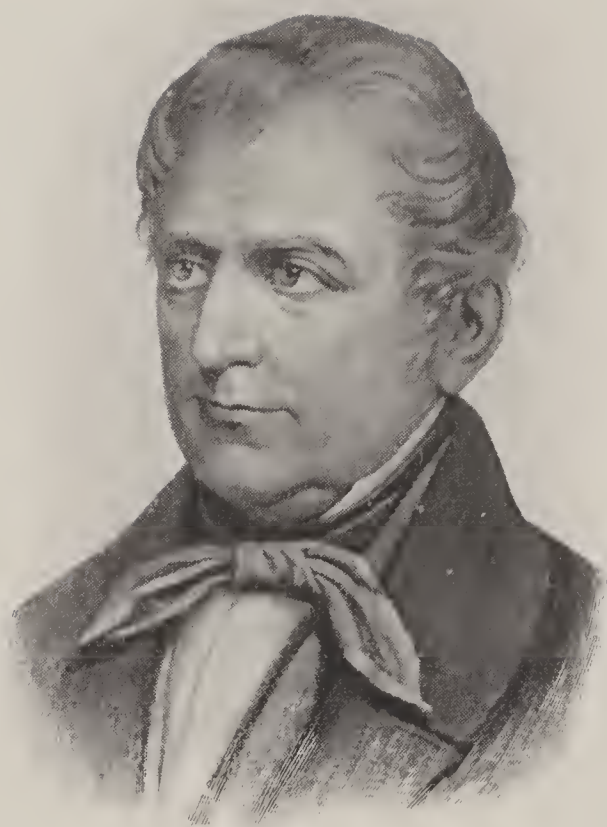
What Irving was, has been indicated in some measure in the course of this sketch. He had a large, generous nature, the kindliness of which is everywhere apparent. Through his wide reading and extensive travels, he acquired a culture of great breadth. He was at home with the explorer on the prairie, or with the sovereign in his court. The gentle elements predominated in his character; he was not inclined to make war upon mankind, and with savage zeal to denounce

their wickedness and shams. He was an observer of humanity rather than a reformer; and he reported what he saw with all the grace of a rich imagination and delicate humor. He was always loyal to truth and right. But in dealing with human frailty, his severest weapon was kindly satire. He evoked a smile at the foibles and eccentricities of men. His heart was of womanly tenderness; and for the sorrows and misfortunes of men he had tears of sympathy. The death of such a man is a loss, not only to literature, but, what is much more, to humanity itself.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

COOPER deserves the honor of being the most national of our writers. He was less influenced by foreign models and foreign subjects than any of his great contemporaries. The works upon which his fame chiefly rests are thoroughly American. He was the first fully to grasp and treat the stores of materials to be found in the natural scenery, early history, and pioneer life of this Republic. He was at home alike on land and sea; and in his narrations he spoke from the fulness of his own observation and experience, and gave us pictures of those early days which will grow in interest as they are removed farther from us by the lapse of time. He opened a new vein of thought. It was largely owing to this freshness of subject and treatment that his works attained an extraordinary popularity, not alone in this country, but also in Europe. They came as a revelation to the Old World, which had grown tired of well-worn themes. They were eagerly seized upon, and translated into nearly every European tongue, and even into some of the languages of the Orient. No other American writer has been so extensively read.

James Fenimore Cooper was born at Burlington, N.J., Sept. 15, 1789, the eleventh of twelve children. His father was of Quaker and his mother of Swedish descent. When he was thirteen months old, the family moved to Cooperstown, on the southeastern shore of Otsego Lake, in the central part of New York. In this picturesque region, diversified with mountains, lakes, and woods, the childhood of Cooper was passed. It was at that time on the borders of civilization, and the little village presented a striking mixture of nationalities and occupations. Along with German, French, and Irish adventurers



JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

were found the backwoodsman, the hunter, and the half-civilized Indian. The deep impression made upon young Cooper's mind by the wild scenery and unsettled life about him is shown in the fact that he located three of his novels in this region.

Cooper's education presents the melancholy story so often met with in the lives of literary men. He took but little interest in his studies. His first instruction was received in the academy at Cooperstown, where, in spite of its pretentious name, the teaching was crude. He afterwards studied in Albany as a private pupil under an Episcopal rector. At the age of thirteen, Cooper entered the Freshman class at Yale, the youngest student but one in the college. According to his own confession, he played all the first year, and there is nothing to show that he did better afterwards. In place of digging at his Latin and Greek, he delighted in taking long walks about the wooded hills and beautiful bay of New Haven. Nature was more to him than books, a preference that college faculties are generally slow to appreciate. At last in his third year he engaged in some mischief that led to his dismissal from the college. This failure in his education was peculiarly unfortunate. His lack of a refined and scholarly taste has tolerated in his works a crudeness of form that largely detracts from their excellence.

It was now decided that Cooper should enter the navy. The influence of his father, who was a prominent Federalist and had been for several years a member of Congress, promised a speedy advancement. He began his apprenticeship (there was no naval academy then) in the merchant marine, and served a year before the mast. He entered the navy as midshipman in January, 1808. He was stationed for a time on Lake Ontario, where he imbibed the impressions afterwards embodied in the graphic descriptions of "The Pathfinder." In 1809 he was transferred to the *Wasp*, then under the command of Lawrence, a hero to whom he was warmly attached. The details of his naval career are scanty. Though it does

not appear that he was engaged in any thrilling events, he accumulated a large store of incident, and acquired a technical knowledge, which were afterwards turned to good account in his admirable sea stories.

His naval career was cut short by his falling in love. In January, 1811, he married a Miss De Lancey, a lady of Huguenot family, and five months later he tendered his resignation in the navy. He made no unworthy choice, and his domestic life appears to have been singularly happy. With a sufficiently strong, not to say obstinate, will, and with high notions of masculine prerogative in the family, he was still largely controlled by the delicate tact of his wife, who always retained a strong hold upon his large and tender heart. For some time after his marriage he was unsettled. He first resided in Westchester County, New York; then he moved to Cooperstown, where he spent the next three years; afterwards he returned to Westchester, and occupied a house that commanded a view of Long Island Sound. Up to this time his chief occupation had been farming; and he had shown no sign whatever either of an inclination or of an ability to write.

His entrance upon a literary career appears to have been the merest accident. He was one day reading to his wife a novel descriptive of English society. It did not please him; and at last, laying it down with some impatience, he exclaimed: "I believe I could write a better story myself." Challenged to make good his boast, he at once set himself to the task. It did not occur to him to treat an American theme with which he was familiar. America had achieved her political but not her intellectual independence of the mother country. He accordingly produced a novel of high life in England, which, under the title of "Precaution," was published in 1820. It did not occur to him as an obstacle that he knew nothing about English life. The day of an exacting realism had not yet come, and men were still permitted to write of things that they knew nothing about. Of course the work was a failure;

but it came so near being a success that Cooper was encouraged to try his hand again.

This time he chose an American subject, and without knowing it fell into the vocation for which his talents eminently fitted him. Years before, at the house of John Jay, he had heard the story of a Revolutionary spy that deeply impressed him. This story he made the basis of his novel; and the scene he laid in Westchester, with which his long residence had made him familiar, and which had been a battleground for the British and American armies. He had but little expectation of its favorable reception. He doubted whether his countrymen would read a book that treated of familiar scenes and interests. The result undeceived him, and fixed him in the career to which he was to give the rest of his life. "The Spy" appeared at the close of 1821, and in a short time met with a sale that was pronounced unprecedented in the annals of American literature. It was received with the enthusiasm that greeted the successive Waverley novels in England. The transatlantic verdict, which was awaited with something of servile trepidation, confirmed the American judgment. "Genius in America," said Blackwood, "must keep to America to achieve any great work. Cooper has done so, and taken his place among the most powerful of the imaginative spirits of the age." "The Spy" was soon translated into several European languages; and, in short, it made Cooper's reputation at home and abroad.

His next work was "The Pioneers," which was published in 1823. The scene is laid at the author's early home on Otsego Lake, and describes not only the natural scenery, but also the types of character and modes of living with which he became familiar in childhood. In producing this work he drew less upon his imagination than upon his memory. As we read his life, it is not difficult to discover the originals of some of his leading portraits. The book was written, as he has told us, exclusively to please himself; and he has dwelt upon separate scenes and incidents with such fondness as seriously to

retard the story. It was the first of the now famous "Leatherstocking Tales," though hardly the best of them. It was awaited by the public with impatience; and by noon, the day of its appearance, no fewer than three thousand five hundred copies were sold in New York.

Before "The Pioneers" was published he was already at work upon a new novel, in which he entered an untried field. Like his first work, it sprang from the impulse of a moment. The author of "Waverley" had recently published "The Pirate," which came under discussion at a dinner-party in Cooper's presence. The nautical passages were greatly admired, and were cited as a proof that Scott, the lawyer and poet, could not have written it. Cooper dissented from this judgment, and boldly challenged the seamanship of the work. In spite of the nautical knowledge it displayed, it still betrayed to his mind the hand of a landsman. "The result of this conversation," to quote his own words, "was a sudden determination to produce a work which, if it had no other merit, might present truer pictures of the ocean and ships than any that are to be found in 'The Pirate.'" Returning home, with the plan of the work already shaping itself in his mind, he said to his wife: "I must write one more book — a sea-tale — to show what can be done in that way by a sailor."

Though he was discouraged in the undertaking by his friends, Cooper wisely followed the leading of his genius. "The Pilot" takes high rank as a tale of the sea. The plot was suggested by the cruise of Paul Jones in the *Ranger*, who, without being named, occupies the foremost place in the story. The work appeared in 1824, and at once attained a wide popularity. Its descriptions of storm, battle, and shipwreck are exceedingly vivid. It contains the character of Long Tom Coffin, who, like Natty Bumppo, or Leatherstocking, may be regarded as a permanent contribution to literature. It was at once translated into French, German, and Italian, and was scarcely less popular in Europe than in America.

In 1826 appeared "The Last of the Mohicans," which

occupies a high rank—some think the highest rank—of all Cooper's works. It belongs to the "Leatherstocking Tales." The interest never abates from beginning to end. "It is indeed an open question," says an admirable critic and biographer,¹ "whether a higher art would not have given more breathing-places in this exciting tale, in which the mind is hurried without pause from sensation to sensation." It is needless to say that its success was instantaneous and prodigious. The novelty of its scenes and characters, as well as its powerful narrative, gave it extraordinary popularity abroad. There can be no doubt that he idealized the Indian character. But however different from the Indians of actual life, the creations of Cooper have appealed strongly to the imaginations of men.

Cooper was now living in the city of New York, whither he had moved in 1822. The income from his works had placed him in easy circumstances. His literary reputation, unequalled by any other American, with the possible exception of Irving, made him a prominent figure in the social life of the city. He founded a club which included in its membership Chancellor Kent, Verplanck the editor of *Shakespeare*, Jarvis the painter, Durand the engraver, Wiley the publisher, Morse the inventor of the electric telegraph, Halleck and Bryant the poets. He was a regular attendant at the weekly meetings of the club, of which he was the life and soul.

The year "The Last of the Mohicans" was published, Cooper carried out a long cherished purpose to visit Europe, where he spent the next seven years. He served as consul at Lyons for nearly three years. He made a trip through Switzerland, and visited in succession Naples, Rome, Venice, Munich, and Dresden; but most of his time was spent in Paris. He was not a man to enjoy being lionized; but after his presence in the French capital became known he could not escape from receiving a full share of attention. Scott met him at an evening reception, and noted in his diary: "Cooper

¹ Lounsbury, *James Fenimore Cooper*, p. 53.

was there, so the Scotch and American lions took the field together."

But Cooper's time abroad was not exclusively spent in the enjoyment of natural scenery, art treasures, and refined society. His literary productivity continued without serious abatement. Among the numerous works produced during his seven years' residence abroad there are two that deserve particular mention. "The Prairie" was added to the Leatherstocking series, and "The Red Rover" to his sea-tales. Both occupy a high place among his works. His popularity in Europe had now reached a high point. Five editions of "The Prairie" were arranged to appear at the same time, — two in Paris, one in London, one in Berlin, and one in Philadelphia. Outside of England he was, perhaps, read more extensively than Scott. "In every city of Europe that I visited," wrote the inventor of the electric telegraph, "the works of Cooper were conspicuously placed in the windows of every bookshop. They are published, as soon as he produces them, in thirty-four different places in Europe. They have been seen by American travellers in the languages of Turkey and Persia, in Constantinople, in Egypt, at Jerusalem, at Ispahan."

With the year 1830 closed the happiest and most successful period of Cooper's literary career. After that date he became involved in controversies abroad and at home that cost him heavily in purse and in popularity. He was intensely American in sentiment — proud of the institutions, the material prosperity, and the rapidly growing power of his country. With prophetic foresight he confidently predicted the growth that has since been realized. With his honest, positive, and pugnacious nature, he was not a man to conceal his opinions. He undertook to enlighten the ignorance and to correct the misrepresentations of his country prevalent abroad. He wrote letters, pamphlets, and books in defence of America. Three of his novels written abroad — "The Bravo," "The Heidenmauer," and "The Headsman" — were designed to exalt republican institutions, and to apply American principles to European con-

ditions. The effect of all this can be easily imagined. The information he volunteered to Europe, and especially to England, was received ungraciously. His independent and aggressive spirit provoked opposition; his works were harshly criticised, and he himself was subject to misrepresentation and detraction.

In 1833 Cooper returned to America. After a brief sojourn in New York, he purchased his father's old estate at Coopers-town, and made that place his residence for the rest of his life. His childhood recollections were dear to him; and in the midst of the lovely scenery about Otsego Lake he found a grateful repose for the prosecution of his literary work. But his life was not destined to flow on undisturbed. His long residence abroad, in contact with the repose and culture of the Old World, had wrought greater changes in him than he was conscious of. He no longer found himself in sympathy with the eager, bustling, restless life of America. He failed to appreciate the sublimity of the conflict which was rapidly subduing a magnificent continent. Without prudence in concealing his sentiments, he proceeded to tell his countrymen what he thought of them. Their restless energy he characterized as sordid greed for gold. He found fault with what he considered their lack of taste, their coarseness of manners, and their provincial narrowness. With inconsiderate valor he rushed into newspaper controversies. In short, while cherishing a deep affection for his country, he exhausted almost every means for achieving a widespread unpopularity. It speedily came; and no other American writer was ever so generally and so venomously assailed.

But meekness was no part of Cooper's character. He was unwilling to rest under reckless and malicious misrepresentation. Accordingly he instituted many suits for libel against prominent papers in New York, including the *Albany Evening Journal*, edited by Thurlow Weed, and *The Tribune*, edited by Horace Greeley. With the aid of his nephew, who was a lawyer, Cooper conducted the prosecutions himself with relentless

energy, and showed himself as effective in an oral address before a jury as in his writings before the public. It is remarkable that in every instance in which he pleaded his own cause he got a verdict awarding him damages.

In 1839 he published his "History of the United States Navy." It was a subject in which he had long been interested, and for which he possessed special fitness. Apart from his naval experience and his skill as a narrator, he possessed the sterling integrity of character that rendered him painstaking and impartial. For the period it covers, the history is not likely to be superseded. But it was impossible that such a work should please everybody. It gave offence in England by setting forth too prominently her numerous defeats upon the sea. It was accordingly attacked with great vigor in some of the leading British reviews. In this country its judicial tone failed to satisfy the partisans of some of our naval heroes. The newspapers were generally unfriendly, and the work was criticised with great injustice. But malicious misrepresentation Cooper answered, as usual, with a suit for libel, in which he was almost invariably successful. At last he fairly became a terror to editors — a class not easily frightened.

The period between 1840 and 1850 was one of great literary activity. The motives inspiring this activity were not such, in part at least, as to promise the best results for art. Cooper had lost in speculation, and found it necessary to increase his resources. He had a good many things to say to the American public in his character as censor. The didactic element became more prominent in his works. As a result, most of the seventeen novels produced in the decade referred to add but little to his fame. To this statement, however, there are several noteworthy exceptions. In 1840 appeared "The Pathfinder," and the following year "The Deerslayer," — two works that rank with the best of his productions. "The Deerslayer" completed the Leatherstocking series. Following the life of Natty Bumppo, and not the order of their composition, this series is as follows: "The Deerslayer," in which Leather-

stocking appears in his youth; "The Last of the Mohicans" and "The Pathfinder," in which we see him in the maturity of his powers; "The Pioneers" and "The Prairie," in which are portrayed his old age and death. Cooper counted these works as his best. "If anything from the pen of the writer of these romances," he said in his old age, "is at all to outlive himself, it is unquestionably the series of the 'Leatherstocking Tales.' To say this is not to predict a very lasting reputation for the series itself, but simply to express the belief that it will outlast any or all of the works from the same hand." Among the other works of this period, which can only be named, are "The Two Admirals," "Wing-and-Wing," "Wyandotte," "Afloat and Ashore," "The Redskins," and "The Ways of the Hour."

The closing years of Cooper's life were comparatively serene. The storm of criticism and detraction, against which he had long contended, had in large measure abated. He was growing again in favor with his countrymen; and his own feelings, as opposition relaxed, subsided into a calmer and kindlier mood. At last disease laid its wasting hand upon his strong frame. It turned into an incurable dropsy. When the physician told him there was no longer any hope, he received the announcement with the manly courage that had characterized him all through life. He gave up the literary projects he was fondly cherishing, and spent his last days in the cheerful resignation of Christian faith. The end came Sept. 14, 1851, on the eve of his sixty-second birthday.

There is no more heroic character in the history of our literature. Cooper was cast in a large and rugged mould. He had deep convictions and a strong will; and hence he was often impatient of opposition, obstinate in his opinions, and brusque in his manners. He never acquired, and perhaps never cared to acquire, a polished deference to the views of others. He did not usually make a favorable impression on first acquaintance. But these defects were only on the surface. He was frank, honest, fearless, large-hearted; and among those who knew him best, he inspired a deep and loyal affection.

He could not be tempted to sacrifice principle, to scheme for reputation, to stoop to anything mean and low.

Cooper has often been called "the American Scott;" and the title, though displeasing to him, is not wholly undeserved. He has described the scenery and manners of his native country with a passion and power scarcely inferior to what is found in the romances of the great Scotchman. He has thrown over the pioneer life of America something of the same glamour with which "the Wizard of the North" has invested the mediæval life of Europe. There are points of striking resemblance in the characters of these two great writers. They belonged to the same type of strong manhood. They were alike chivalrous and patriotic. With abounding physical strength, they rejoiced in the companionship of the woods and mountains. Their hearts were open to the charms of natural scenery. They were both, to borrow a term from mental science, *objective* rather than *subjective* in their habits of thought; and thus it happens that instead of profound psychological studies, they have given us glowing descriptions and thrilling narratives.

Cooper's works do not exhibit a high degree of literary art. His novels, like those of Scott, are characterized by largeness rather than by delicacy. He painted on a large canvas with a heavy brush. He worked with great rapidity; and as a natural consequence we miss all refinement of style. He is often slovenly, and sometimes incorrect. The conversations, which he introduces freely, are seldom natural, often bombastic, and generally tiresome. His plots are usually defective. His novels are made up of narratives more or less closely connected, but not forming necessary parts in the development of a dramatic story. With some notable exceptions, his characters are rather wooden, and move very much like automata. They are continually doing things without any apparent or sufficient reason. His women belong to the type which is made up, to use his own phrase, "of religion and female decorum." They are insipid, helpless, vague—so limited by a narrow and conventional decorum as to be wholly uninterest-

ing. They rarely say anything or do anything that shows the true womanly spirit of devotion, helpfulness, and self-sacrifice.

These are faults that are palpable and acknowledged. What, then, are the excellences which, triumphing over these serious drawbacks, still render Cooper one of the most popular of authors? First, he had the power of graphic description. Without catching the spiritual significance of nature, he yet presented its various forms with extraordinary vividness. "If Cooper," said Balzac, "had succeeded in the painting of character to the same extent that he did in the painting of the phenomena of nature, he would have uttered the last word of our art."

But above this and above every other quality is Cooper's power as a narrator. It is here that his genius manifests itself in its full power. His best novels are made up of a succession of interesting or exciting events, which he narrates with supreme art. We realize every detail, and often follow the story with breathless interest. Cooper is an author, not for literary critics, but for general readers. In the words of Bryant, "he wrote for mankind at large; hence it is that he has earned a fame wider than any author of modern times. The creations of his genius shall survive through centuries to come, and perish only with our language."

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

GREAT genius is not always associated with exalted character. There is much in the life of Pope, of Burns, and of Byron that we cannot approve of. So far as their works reflect their moral obliquities, we are forced to make abatements in our praise. It is greatly to the credit of American literature that its leading representatives have been men of excellent character. Dissolute genius has not flourished on our soil. At the funeral of Bryant, it was truthfully said, "It is the glory of this man that his character outshone even his great talent and his large fame." In a poem "To Bryant on his Birthday," Whittier beautifully said:—

"We praise not now the poet's art,
The rounded beauty of his song;
Who weighs him from his life apart
Must do his nobler nature wrong."

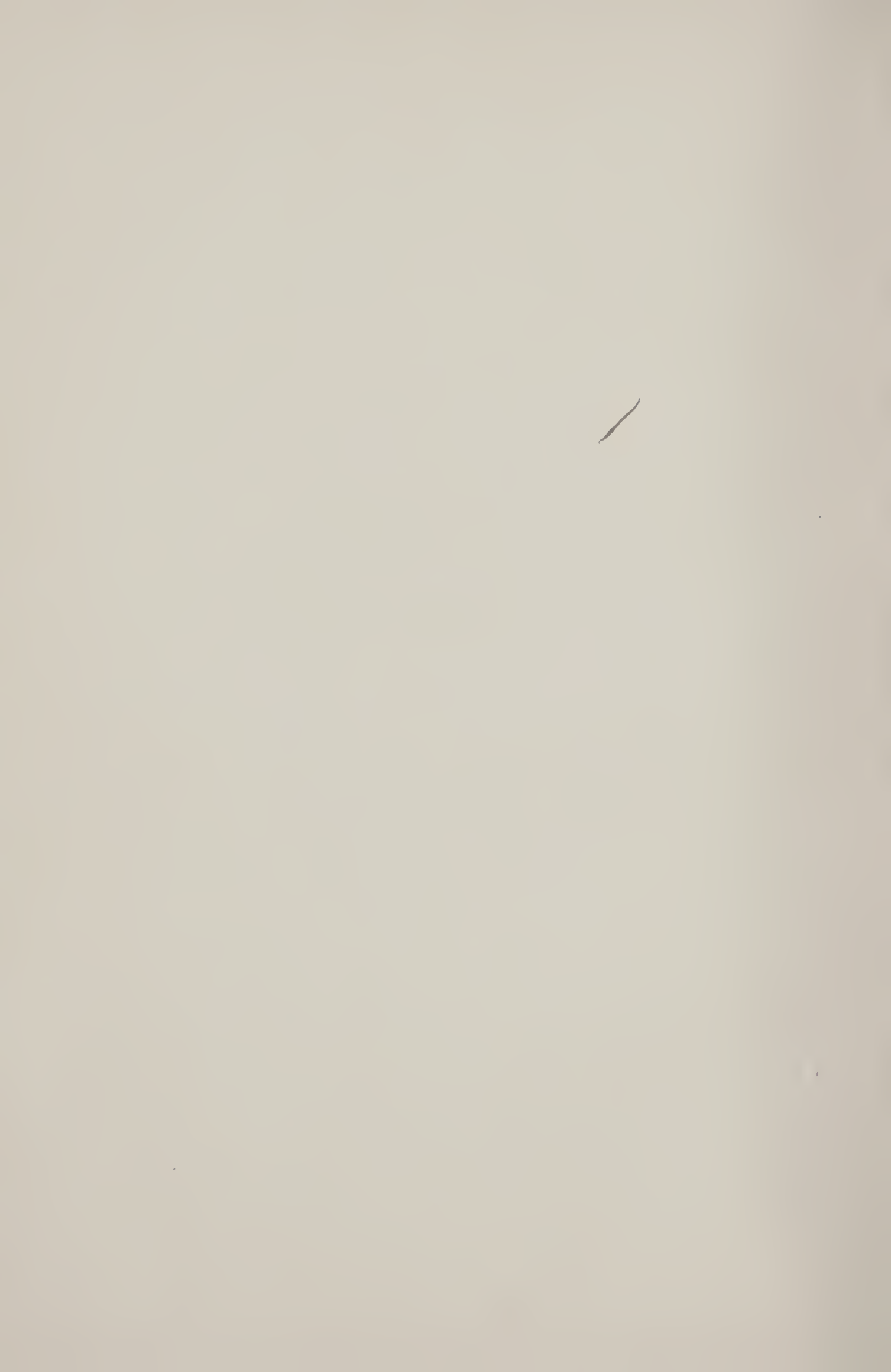
The moral element in literature is of the highest importance. It is a French maxim, often disregarded in France as elsewhere, that "Nothing is beautiful but truth."¹ It is certain that only truth is enduring. Whatever is false is sure, sooner or later, to pass away. Bryant gave beautiful expression to the same idea in the oft-quoted lines from his poem, "The Battle-Field:"—

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
Th' eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshippers."

¹ *Rien n'est beau que le vrai.*



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.



This truth is often forgotten or neglected by our men of letters. Whatever is false in any way, whether in fact, principle, sentiment, taste, cannot be permanent. This is the secret of the wrecks that strew the fields of literature. The enduring works of literature — those that men are unwilling to let die — are helpful to humanity. No art, however exquisite, can win lasting currency for error. Judged by this principle, the works of Bryant are enduring. They are not only admirable in literary art, but they are true in thought, sentiment, and taste. It may be said of him, as was said of James Thomson, his works contain —

“No line which, dying, he could wish to blot.”

William Cullen Bryant was born at Cummington, Mass., Nov. 3, 1794. He came of sound Puritan stock, counting among his ancestors the Priscilla and John Alden immortalized by another descendant and poet. His father was a kind, cultured, and refined physician, who took more than ordinary interest in the training of his gifted son. In his “Hymn to Death,” the composition of which was interrupted by the decease of his father, the poet pays him a noble tribute:—

“This faltering verse, which thou
Shalt not, as wont, o’erlook, is all I have
To offer at thy grave—this—and the hope
To copy thy example, and to leave
A name of which the wretched shall not think
As of an enemy’s, whom they forgive
As all forgive the dead. Rest, therefore, thou
Whose early guidance trained my infant steps—
Rest, in the bosom of God, till the brief sleep
Of death is over, and a happier life
Shall dawn to waken thine insensible dust.”

Bryant was a child of extraordinary precocity. At the age of sixteen months he knew all the letters of the alphabet. In the district school he distinguished himself as an almost infal-

libre speller. He was prepared for college by the Rev. Moses Hallock of Plainfield. Of his Greek studies the poet says, "I began with the Greek alphabet, passed to the declensions and conjugations, which I committed to memory, and was put into the Gospel of St. John. In two calendar months from the time of beginning with the powers of the Greek alphabet, I had read every book in the New Testament." In October, 1810, when in his sixteenth year, he entered the Sophomore class at Williams College, where he spent only one session. Though a diligent student, he did not find college life, owing to its meagre comforts, entirely to his taste.

Bryant showed a rhyming propensity at an early age. He eagerly devoured whatever poetry fell into his hands, and early cherished the ambition to become a poet. Among his early efforts was a political satire against Jefferson and his party, inspired by the Embargo Act, — a measure that proved disastrous to many private interests in New England, and excited strong feeling against the President. Bryant's father was a prominent Federalist; and the young poet, not unnaturally, became a violent partisan. In "The Embargo," written when he was thirteen, he rather uncourteously demanded Jefferson's resignation: —

"Go, wretch, resign the presidential chair,
Disclose thy secret measures, foul or fair.
Go search with curious eye for horrid frogs
Mid the wild wastes of Louisianian bogs."

This satire, which had quite a success at the time, the poet afterwards would have gladly forgotten; but, when he subsequently became a Democratic editor, the opposing press took care to see that he was occasionally reminded of it.

Having failed for lack of means in completing his college course, he decided to study law, and entered the office of Judge Howe at Worthington. He afterwards completed his legal studies under William Baylies at West Bridgewater. His heart was never fully in the study of law, and his retiring dis-

position did not promise a very brilliant career at the bar. Nevertheless, while in some measure indulging his fondness for poetry, he gave himself with commendable diligence to Blackstone and Coke. In a poetical effusion of the time, he recorded his experience as follows:—

“O'er Coke's black letter,
Trimming the lamp at eve, 'tis mine to pore,
Well pleased to see the venerable sage
Unlock his treasured wealth of legal lore;
And I that loved to trace the woods before,
And climb the hills, a playmate of the breeze,
Have vowed to tune the rural lay no more,
Have bid my useless classics sleep at ease,
And left the race of bards to scribble, starve, and freeze.”

He was admitted to the bar in 1815, and began practice at Plainfield; but, finding the outlook unpromising, he removed at the end of a year to Great Barrington. He met with a fair degree of success, but was deeply chagrined to find that law is not always synonymous with justice. He was far too conscientious to be careless and negligent; but, as we learn from a letter written at this period, his inclination was toward literature. “You ask,” he writes to Mr. Baylies, his old teacher and friend, “whether I am pleased with my profession. Alas, sir, the muse was my first love; and the remains of that passion, which is not cooled out nor chilled into extinction, will always, I fear, cause me to look coldly on the severe beauties of Themis. Yet I tame myself to its labors as well as I can, and have endeavored to discharge with punctuality and attention such of the duties of my profession as I am capable of performing.”

As was to be expected, nature and poetry were his refuge and comfort in the midst of the uncongenialities of his profession. His love of nature was scarcely less strong than that of Wordsworth. His portrayal of natural beauty is a prominent characteristic of his poetry. “I was always,” he says, “from my earliest years, a delighted observer of external

nature, — the splendors of a winter daybreak over the wide wastes of snow seen from our windows, the glories of the autumnal woods, the gloomy approaches of a thunderstorm, and its departure amid sunshine and rainbows, the return of the spring with its flowers, and the first snowfall of winter. The poets fostered this taste in me; and though at that time I rarely heard such things spoken of, it was none the less cherished in my secret mind." In his poem, "Green River," he reveals the state of his mind at this period, though in a manner not very complimentary to his clients and associates at the bar: —

"Though forced to drudge for the dregs of men,
And scrawl strange words with the barbarous pen,
And mingle among the jostling crowd
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud,
I often come to this quiet place
To breathe the airs that ruffle thy face,
And gaze upon thee in silent dream;
For in thy lonely and lovely stream
An image of that calm life appears
That won my heart in my greener years."

The time had now come for a more general recognition of Bryant's poetic gifts. Genius is apt to be recognized sooner or later. In 1817 his father sent to the *North American Review* a copy of verses which the poet had written in his eighteenth year and laid away in his desk. "Ah, Phillips," said the sceptical Dana to his associate editor on hearing the verses, "you have been imposed upon. No one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verse." The poem in question was "Thanatopsis," the finest poem that had yet been produced in America, and one of the most remarkable pieces ever written at so early an age. "There was no mistaking the quality of these verses," says a biographer. "The stamp of genius was upon every line. No such verses had been made in America before. They soon found their way into the school-books of the country. They were quoted from the pulpit and upon the hustings. Their gifted author had a national fame

before he had a vote, and in due time 'Thanatopsis' took the place which it still retains among the masterpieces of English didactic poetry."

Another of Bryant's most exquisite poems belongs to this period. As he was on his way to Plainfield in December, 1815, to see what inducements it offered for the practice of his profession, he watched a solitary bird pursuing its course southward through the roseate evening sky. He was deeply impressed both by the beauty of the scene and by the lesson it brought to him in an hour of uncertainty and discouragement. That night he wrote "To a Waterfowl," which some persons have thought the gem of all his works:—

" Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

.

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
The desert and illimitable air,—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright."

At Great Barrington, Bryant met Miss Frances Fairchild, whose native goodness, frank and affectionate disposition, and excellent understanding, captivated his heart. Of course she became the inspiration of a good many poems, only one of which, however, the poet has cared to preserve:—

" Oh, fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye."

They were married in 1821, and for nearly half a century she was "the good angel of his life." The union was a singularly happy one. The poet's tender attachment is exhibited in several admirable poems. In "The Future Life" he asks the question so natural to deathless love:—

"How shall I know thee in the sphere which keeps
The disembodied spirits of the dead,
When all of thee that time could wither sleeps
And perishes among the dust we tread?"

In "The Life that Is" the poet celebrates the recovery of his wife from a serious illness in Italy in 1858:—

"Twice wert thou given me; once in thy fair prime,
Fresh from the fields of youth, when first we met,
And all the blossoms of that hopeful time
Clustered and glowed where'er thy steps were set.

And now, in thy ripe autumn, once again
Given back to fervent prayers and yearnings strong,
From the drear realm of sickness and of pain,
Where we had watched, and feared, and trembled long."

She was indeed a helpmeet for him. "I never wrote a poem," he said, "that I did not repeat to her, and take her judgment upon it. I found its success with the public precisely in proportion to the impression it made upon her. She loved my verses and judged them kindly, but did not like them all equally well." His poem "October, 1866," written upon the occasion of her death, is a threnody of great beauty.

With his growing literary reputation, Bryant's dissatisfaction with his profession increased. He was for several years a regular contributor to the *United States Gazette*, published in Boston, and wrote for it some of his best-known pieces, most notable of which is "A Forest Hymn." A sonnet, which in his collected poems bears the title "Consumption," had a

deep personal meaning. It was written of his sister, a young woman of rare endowments and sweet disposition, who died in her twenty-second year:—

“Death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree.”

This sister, who had been the cherished companion of his childhood, is the theme of the well-known poem “The Death of the Flowers.” The calm, mild days of late autumn, the season in which she died, reminded the true-hearted poet of her loss:—

“And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side;
In the cold, moist earth we laid her when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.”

In 1825, through the influence of friends, Bryant moved to New York, gave up the practice of law, and fairly launched upon a literary career. He became editor of a monthly magazine at a salary of a thousand dollars a year—about twice as much, he tells us, as he received from the practice of his profession. But the magazine did not succeed, and the poet passed through a period of uncertainty and depression. As usual, he turned his experience into verse. In “The Journey of Life,” written at this time, we find the following pathetic lines:—

“Beneath the waning moon I walk at night,
And muse on human life—for all around
Are dim uncertain shapes that cheat the sight,
And pitfalls lurk in shade along the ground,
And broken gleams of brightness, here and there,
Glance through, and leave unwarmed the deathlike air.”

But amid the discouragements of this brief period he was sustained by the friendship and sympathy of Cooper, Kent, Verplanck, Morse, Halleck, and other congenial spirits.

In 1826 Bryant became connected with the *Evening Post*, to which he gave more than half a century of his life. His career as a journalist is unsurpassed in the devotion with which he gave himself to the best interests of his country and of humanity. He set before himself a high ideal of editorial responsibility and journalistic excellence. His example and influence contributed no small part to the elevation of the metropolitan press. Though his sympathies in the main were with the Democratic party, he was never a blind or unscrupulous partisan. Principle was always more to him than party. In his devotion to what he recognized as truth, he often took the unpopular side. He was independent and fearless. He developed the *Evening Post* into a great newspaper, which at last, after many laborious years, brought him an ample income.

His prose was of a high order. He wrote slowly and with great care. He was particular even to the point of fastidiousness in his diction. His style was simple, clear, direct, forcible. "It seems to me," he said, "that in style we ought first, and above all things, to aim at clearness of expression. An obscure style is, of course, a bad style." To a young man, who had asked his opinion of a piece of writing, he wrote: "I observe that you have used several French expressions in your letter. I think if you will study the English language, that you will find it capable of expressing all the ideas you may have. I have always found it so; and in all I have written I do not recall an instance where I was tempted to use a foreign word but that, on searching, I have found a better one in my own language. Be simple, unaffected; be honest in your speaking and writing. Never use a long word where a short one will do as well. . . . The only true way to shine, even in this false world, is to be modest and unassuming. Falsehood may be a thick crust, but in the course of time

Truth will find a place to break through. Elegance of language may not be in the power of us all, but simplicity and straightforwardness are." These are the principles to which his own prose writing is conformed.

As an editor and a man he had some little peculiarities. His violent temper he schooled himself to keep under perfect control. Though master of a scathing satire, he never allowed himself to be betrayed into an abuse of that dangerous faculty. His editorials were invariably written on the backs of letters and other pieces of waste paper. He used a quill pen, which he mended with a knife almost as old as himself. Indeed, he looked upon old servants, whether animate or inanimate, with a childlike tenderness. It is related of him that he clung to an old blue cotton umbrella long after its day of usefulness had passed; and a suggestion to replace his well-worn knife with a new one he would have discountenanced almost as an impertinence.

Bryant was fond of travel, which brought him both mental and physical recreation. He was a hard worker; and from time to time, in his later years, relaxation became a necessity to him. Between the years 1834 and 1867 he made no fewer than six visits to the Old World. He not only visited the leading cities of Europe, but extended his travels to Egypt and Syria. His fame preceded him, and everywhere he was received with the marks of honor that were due him as a poet and a man. In Great Britain he met most of the illustrious authors and scholars of his day, including Wordsworth, Rogers, Moore, Hallam, Whewell, and Herschel. His letters to the *Evening Post*, descriptive of his travels abroad, were afterwards collected into a volume with the title "Letters of a Traveller." His fine sense of propriety led him to exclude from his letters all reference to the distinguished people he met. In 1872 he visited Cuba and Mexico, where honors were lavishly bestowed upon him.

By reason of his distinguished position in New York, Bryant was frequently called on for public addresses. This was espe-

cially true when the life and character of some eminent person were to be commemorated. He delivered memorial addresses upon the artist Thomas Cole, upon Cooper, Irving, Halleck, and Verplanck. He was not an orator, but he delivered his carefully prepared discourses with impressive dignity. Though his treatment was always sympathetic, his estimates are singularly judicious, and his commemorative addresses are models of their kind.

But whatever excellence Bryant attained in other spheres, he was above all a poet. Throughout his long and laborious career, he remained true to the muse he had wooed in his youth. But he was not a prolific poet. Sometimes his prosaic duties as a journalist left but little time for poetry. There are years in which he wrote little or nothing. Besides his lack of leisure and favorable surroundings, he was too conscientious a workman to be satisfied with anything but the best he was capable of. To him poetry was a serious vocation, which called for the highest exercise of mind and soul. In "The Poet" he says: —

"Thou who wouldst wear the name
Of poet mid thy brethren of mankind,
And clothe in words of flame
Thoughts that shall live within the general mind,
Deem not the framing of a deathless lay
The pastime of a drowsy summer day.

But gather all thy powers,
And wreak them on the verse that thou dost weave,
And in thy lonely hours,
At silent morning or at wakeful eve,
While the warm current tingles through thy veins,
Set forth the burning words in fluent strains."

In 1831 Bryant issued a small volume containing about eighty of his poems. His simple, honest nature revolted at everything like sham. He rejected what he called "striking novelties of expression;" and he had no patience with the remote allusions or hazy diction, to which it is difficult to attach

a definite meaning. "To me it seems," he said, "that one of the most important requisites for a great poet is a luminous style. The elements of poetry lie in natural objects, in the vicissitudes of human life, in the emotions of the human heart, and the relation of man to man. He who can present them in combinations and lights which at once affect the mind with a deep sense of their truth and beauty is the poet for his own age and the ages that succeed it." To these principles all his poetry is conformed.

Bryant wished to have his poems published also in England; and, though unacquainted with him at the time, he solicited Irving's influence and aid. Irving, who had a genuine admiration for Bryant's poetry, interested himself in the enterprise, secured a publisher, and, to give the volume some degree of prestige, he appeared as editor, and prefixed a dedicatory letter addressed to Samuel Rogers. This act of disinterested kindness was admirable, and called forth Bryant's grateful appreciation. But it subsequently led to some correspondence not entirely free from asperity. In the poem, "Song of Marion's Men," occur the lines, —

"And the British foeman trembles
When Marion's name is heard."

These lines were objected to by the London publisher as reflecting upon British valor, and as likely, therefore, to prejudice the British public. Accordingly Irving judged it best to change the first line into —

"The foeman trembles in his camp."

Under the circumstances there was but little room to find fault with this alteration. But Leggett, editor of the *Plain-dealer* and intimate friend of Bryant's, denounced the change as "literary pusillanimity." This severe and unnecessary charge called forth letters from both Irving and Bryant; but the ill-feeling engendered at the moment proved only a ripple

on the surface of their profound appreciation of each other's ability and character.

Bryant's poetry has a quality of its own, as distinct and recognizable as that of Corot's paintings. Beyond all other verse produced in America, it has what may be called a classic quality. It is clear, calm, elevated, strong. Many of his poems, in their finished form and chastened self-restraint, resemble Greek statuary. His poetry is pervaded by a reflective, ethical tone. The objects of nature, which he dwells on with untiring fondness, convey to his mind some beautiful lesson of hope, comfort, courage. He looks, for instance, upon the North Star, and in its beams he beholds —

“A beauteous type of that unchanging good,
That bright eternal beacon, by whose ray
The voyager of time should shape his heedful way.”

Though there are few that speak in praise of the wild, stormy month of March, he bids it a cordial welcome: —

“Thou bringst the hope of those calm skies,
And that soft time of sunny showers,
When the wide bloom, on earth that lies,
Seems of a brighter world than ours.”

He does not sigh at the increasing speed with which the years pass by: —

“Then haste thee, Time, — 'tis kindness all
That speeds thy wingèd feet so fast;
The pleasures stay not till they pall,
And all thy pains are quickly past.

Thou fliest and bear'st away our woes,
And as thy shadowy train depart,
The memory of sorrow grows
A lighter burden on the heart.”

To those who lament the degeneracy of their time, and are filled with gloomy forebodings of the future, he says, —

“Oh, no! a thousand cheerful omens give
- Hope of yet happier days whose dawn is nigh.
He who has tamed the elements, shall not live
The slave of his own passions; he whose eye
Unwinds the eternal dances of the sky,
And in the abyss of brightness dares to span
The sun's broad circle, rising yet more high,
In God's magnificent works his will shall scan,
And love and peace shall make their paradise with man.”

Bryant's poetry is not artificial. It sprang out of the depths of his soul; it is the natural expression of his deepest thoughts and feelings. It was inspired chiefly by the scenery, life, and history of his own country, — a fact that makes him pre-eminently an American poet. “He never, by any chance,” says Stedman, “affected passion or set himself to artificial song. He had the triple gift of Athene, ‘self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.’ He was incapable of pretending to raptures that he did not feel; and this places him far above a host of those who, without knowing it, hunt for emotions, and make poetry but little better than a trade.”

Bryant crowned his long literary life with a translation of the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey.” The former was undertaken in 1865, when the poet was in his seventy-first year, and it was completed four years later. His vigorous health and disciplined faculties had always enabled him to work with unusual regularity. He was never dependent on moments of happy inspiration. In translating Homer he set himself the task of forty lines a day. He found fault with the translations of Pope and Cowper, because of their lack of fidelity to the original. “I have sought to attain,” he says, “what belongs to the original, — a fluent narrative style which shall carry the reader forward without the impediment of unexpected inversions and capricious phrases, and in which, if he find nothing to stop at and admire, there will at least be nothing to divert his attention from the story and characters of the poem, from the events related and the objects described.” Scarcely was the “Iliad”

finished, when he began the "Odyssey." It was completed in two years. The entire translation, which was a credit to American talent and scholarship, met with a cordial reception. It satisfied the high expectations that had preceded its appearance. In fidelity to the original, in its admirable style and diction, and in its successful reproduction of the heroic spirit, it surpasses, perhaps, all other translations.

Besides his city residence, Bryant had two houses in the country, — one near the village of Roslyn, Long Island, commanding an extensive prospect of land and water; the other, the old Bryant homestead at Cummington. He was accustomed, the latter part of his life, to spend about one-half his time at these country homes. He took great interest in beautifying them, and was "aye sticking in a tree." At his home near Roslyn, to which he gave the name of "Cedarmere," he did some of his best work. It was the abode of simplicity and taste, to which he welcomed many friends and distinguished guests.

Bryant was a deeply religious man; but he attached more importance to reverence, righteousness, and charity than to any ecclesiastical creed. Though brought up in the Calvinistic faith, his later theological sympathies were with the Unitarians. "The religious man," he wrote near the end of his life, "finds in his relations to his Maker a support to his virtue which others cannot have. He acts always with a consciousness that he is immediately under the eyes of a Being who looks into his heart, and sees his inmost thoughts, and discerns the motives which he is half unwilling to acknowledge even to himself. He feels that he is under the inspiration of a Being who is only pleased with right motives and purity of intention, and who is displeased with whatever is otherwise. He feels that the approbation of that Being is infinitely more to be valued than the applause of all mankind, and his displeasure more to be feared and more to be avoided than any disgrace which he might sustain from his brethren of mankind." He had a profound reverence for the character

and teachings of Christ, whose sweetness and beneficence he exemplified in his own life with advancing years.

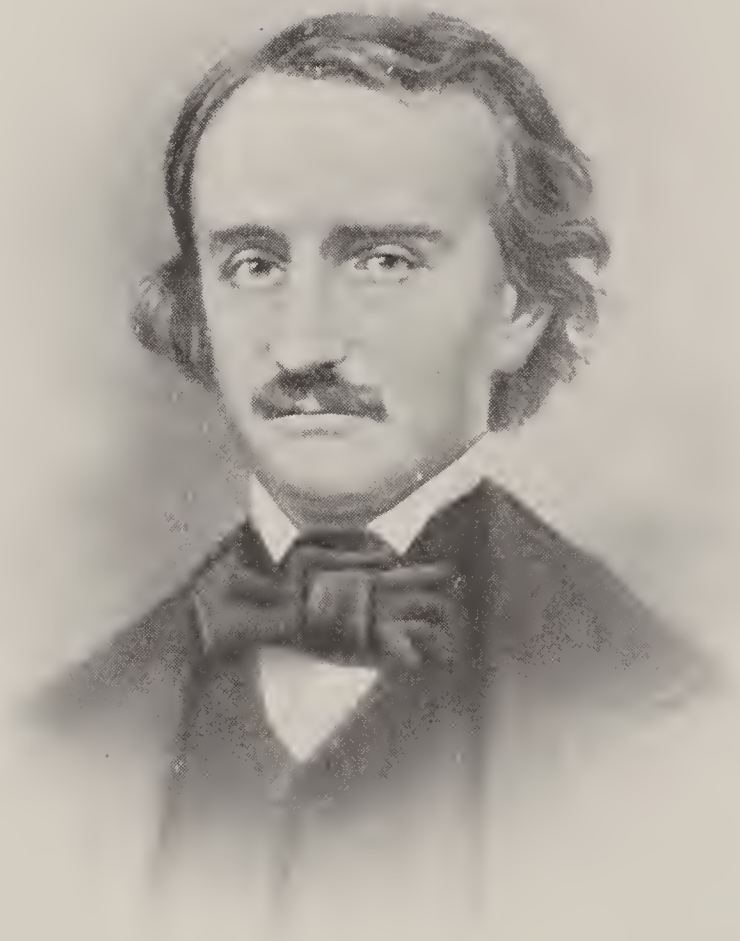
The rich, full life of Bryant continued far beyond the allotted period of man; but the end came suddenly. In the latter part of May, 1878, he delivered an address at the unveiling of a statue to Mazzini, the Italian patriot, in Central Park. He had not been feeling well for several days, and exposure to the sun proved too much for his strength. On entering the house of a friend near the Park, he suddenly lost consciousness, and, falling backward, struck his head violently on the stone platform of the front steps. The terrific blow caused concussion of the brain, from which he died June 12, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. "By reason of his venerable age," wrote Dr. J. G. Holland, "his unquestioned genius, his pure and lofty character, his noble achievement in letters, his great influence as a public journalist, and his position as a pioneer in American literature, William Cullen Bryant had become, without a suspicion of the fact in his own modest thought, the principal citizen of the great republic. By all who knew him, and by millions who never saw him, he was held in the most affectionate reverence. When he died, therefore, and was buried from sight, he left a sense of personal loss in all worthy American hearts."

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

It is difficult to form a just and satisfactory estimate of Edgar Allan Poe. His genius is unquestionable; but then it was associated with poor judgment and a faulty character. It is not easy to get at the facts. Like Pope, he did not hesitate to mislead and mystify his readers. His biographers are generally either friendly or hostile partisans. If the latter paint his character and career in colors so dark as to be almost incredible, the former can at best only extenuate and apologize for his mistakes and vices.

Poe occupies a peculiar place in American literature. He has been called our most interesting literary man. He stands alone for his intellectual brilliancy and his lamentable failure to use it wisely. No one can read his works intelligently without being impressed with his extraordinary ability. Whether poetry, criticism, or fiction, he shows extraordinary power in them all. But the moral element in life is the most important, and in this Poe was lacking. With him truth was not the first necessity. He allowed his judgment to be warped by friendship, and apparently sacrificed sincerity to the vulgar desire of gaining popular applause. He gambled and drank liquor; and for these reasons chiefly, though the fact has been denied by some, he was unable for any considerable length of time to maintain himself in a responsible or lucrative position. Fortune repeatedly opened to him an inviting door; but he constantly and ruthlessly abused her kindness.

Edgar Allan Poe descended from an honorable ancestry. His grandfather, David Poe, was a Revolutionary hero, over whose grave, as he kissed the sod, Lafayette pronounced the words, "*Ici repose un cœur noble.*" His father, an impulsive



EDGAR ALLAN POE.

and wayward youth, became enamored of an English actress, and forsook the bar for the stage. The couple were duly married, and acted with moderate success in the principal towns and cities of the country. It was during an engagement at Boston that the future poet was born, Jan. 19, 1809.¹ Two years later the wandering pair were again in Richmond, where within a few weeks of each other they died in poverty. They left three children, the second of whom, the subject of this sketch, was kindly received into the home of Mr. John Allan, a wealthy merchant of the city.

The early training of Poe may be taken as a very good example of how *not* to bring up children. The boy was remarkably pretty and precocious; and his foster-parents allowed no opportunity to pass without showing him off. After dinner in this elegant and hospitable home, he was frequently placed upon the table to drink to the health of the guests, and to deliver short declamations, for which he had inherited a decided talent. He was flattered and fondled and indulged in every way. Is it strange that under this training he acquired a taste for strong drink, and became opinionated and perverse?

In 1815 Mr. Allan went to England with his family to spend several years, and there placed the young Edgar at school in an ancient and historic town, which has since been swallowed up in the overflow of the great metropolis. The venerable appearance and associations of the town, as may be learned from the autobiographic tale of "William Wilson," made a deep and lasting impression on the imaginative boy.

After five years spent in this English school, where he learned to read Latin and to speak French, he was brought back to America, and placed in a Richmond academy. Without much diligence in study, his brilliancy enabled him to take high rank in his classes. His skill in verse-making and

¹ Different dates are given, and Baltimore is frequently mentioned as the place of his birth; but the matter may be regarded as finally settled by Woodberry in his excellent biography of Poe.

in debate made him prominent in the school. He excelled in athletic exercises, especially in running and jumping; and it is related of him that on one occasion, stimulated perhaps by the aquatic feats of Byron, he swam a distance of six miles against a strong tide without much apparent fatigue. But he was not generally popular among his fellow-students. Conscious of his superior intellectual endowments (which, however, as is usual in such cases, were not as great as he imagined), he was disposed to live apart, and to indulge in moody reverie. According to the testimony of one who knew him well at this time, he was "self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and though of generous impulses, not steadily kind, or even amiable."

In 1826, at the age of seventeen, P^{oe} matriculated at the University of Virginia, and entered the schools of ancient and modern languages. The university has never been noted for rigid discipline or Puritanic morals. Its laxity in both particulars chimed in well with Poe's natural impulses. Though he attended his classes with a fair degree of regularity, he was not slow in joining the fast set that spent more time in drinking and gambling than in study. Gambling especially became a passion, and he lost heavily. His reckless expenditures led Mr. Allan to visit Charlottesville for the purpose of inquiring into his habits. The result was not satisfactory; and, though his adopted son won high honors in Latin and French, Mr. Allan refused to allow him to return to the university after the close of his first session, and placed him in his own counting-room.

It is not difficult to foresee the next step in the drama before us. Many a genius of far greater self-restraint and moral earnestness has found the routine of business almost intolerably irksome. With high notions of his own ability, and with a temper rebellious to all restraint, Poe soon broke away from his new duties, and started out to seek his fortune. He went to Boston; and, in eager search for fame and money, he resorted to the unpromising expedient of publishing in

1827 a small volume of poems. As viewed in the light of his subsequent career, the volume gives here and there an intimation of the author's genius; but, as was to be expected, it attracted but little attention, and disappointed all his ambitious hopes. He was soon reduced to financial straits; and, in his pressing need, he enlisted, under an assumed name, in the United States army. He served at Fort Moultrie, and afterwards at Fortress Monroe. He rose to the rank of sergeant-major; and, according to the testimony of his superiors, he was "exemplary in his deportment, prompt and faithful in the discharge of his duties."

In 1829, when his heart was softened by the death of his wife, Mr. Allan became reconciled to his adopted but wayward son. Through his influence, young Poe secured a discharge from the army, and obtained an appointment as cadet at West Point. He entered the military academy July 1, 1830, and, as usual, established a reputation for brilliancy and folly. He was reserved, exclusive, discontented, and censorious. As described by a classmate, "He was an accomplished French scholar, and had a wonderful aptitude for mathematics, so that he had no difficulty in preparing his recitations in his class, and in obtaining the highest marks in these departments. He was a devourer of books; but his great fault was his neglect of and apparent contempt for military duties. His wayward and capricious temper made him at times utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-call, drills, and guard duties. These habits subjected him often to arrest and punishment, and effectually prevented his learning or discharging the duties of a soldier." The final result is obvious. At the end of six months, he was summoned before a court-martial, tried, and expelled.

Before leaving West Point, Poe arranged for the publication of a volume of poetry, which appeared in New York in 1831. This volume, to which the students of the academy subscribed liberally in advance, is noteworthy in several particulars. In a prefatory letter Poe lays down the poetic prin-

ciple to which he endeavored to conform his productions. It throws much light on his poetry by exhibiting the ideal at which he aimed. "A poem, in my opinion," he says, "is opposed to a work of science by having for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite* instead of a definite pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *indefinite* sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definiteness." Music embodied in a golden mist of thought and sentiment—this is Poe's poetic ideal.

As illustrative of his musical rhythm, the following lines from "Al Aaraaf" may be given:—

"Ligeia! Ligeia!
 My beautiful one!
 Whose harshest idea
 Will to melody run,
 O! is it thy will
 On the breezes to toss?
 Or, capriciously still,
 Like the lone albatross,
 Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
 To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there?"

Or take the last stanza of "Israfel:"—

"If I could dwell
 Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
 He might not sing so wildly well
 A mortal melody,
 While a bolder note than this might swell
 From my lyre within the sky."

The two principal poems in the volume under consideration — “Al Aaraaf” and “Tamerlane” — were obvious imitations of Moore and Byron. The beginning of “Al Aaraaf,” for example, might easily be mistaken for an extract from “Lalla Rookh,” so similar are the rhythm and rhyme:—

“O! nothing earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty’s eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassy—
O! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill—
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy’s voice so peacefully departed
That like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
Oh, nothing of the dross of ours—
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
The wandering star.”

In this poem there is a further imitation of Moore in the copious annotations, in which Poe tries to appear learned by the cheap trick of mentioning obscure names, and quoting scholarly authorities at second-hand. It indicates his singular lack of moral integrity that he kept up this evil practice all through his literary career.

After his expulsion from West Point, Poe appears to have gone to Richmond; but the long-suffering of Mr. Allan, who had married again and was expecting a lineal descendant, was at length exhausted. He refused to extend any further recognition to one whom he had too much reason to regard as unappreciative and undeserving. Accordingly, Poe was finally thrown upon his own resources for a livelihood. He settled in Baltimore, where he had a few acquaintances and friends, and entered upon that literary career which is without parallel in American literature for its achievements, its vicissitudes, and

its sorrows. With no qualification for the struggle of life other than intellectual brilliancy, he bitterly atoned, through disappointment and suffering, for his defects of temper, lack of judgment, and habits of intemperance.

In 1833 the Baltimore *Saturday Visitor* offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best prose story. This prize Poe won by his tale "A MS. Found in a Bottle." This success may be regarded as the first step in his literary career. The ability displayed in this fantastic tale brought him to the notice of John P. Kennedy, Esq., who at once befriended him in his distress, and aided him in his literary projects. He gave Poe, whom he found in extreme poverty, free access to his table, and, to use his own words, "brought him up from the very verge of despair."

After a year or more of hack work in Baltimore, Poe, through the influence of his kindly patron, obtained employment on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and removed to Richmond in 1835. Here he made a brilliant start; life seemed to open before him full of promise. In a short time he was promoted to the editorship of the *Messenger*, and by his tales, poems, and especially his reviews, he made that periodical very popular. In a twelvemonth he increased its subscription list from seven hundred to nearly five thousand, and made the magazine a rival of the *Knickerbocker* and the *New Englander*. He was loudly praised by the Southern press, and was generally regarded as one of the foremost writers of the day.

In the *Messenger*, Poe began his work as a critic. It is hardly necessary to say that his criticism was of the slashing kind. He became little short of a terror. With a great deal of critical acumen and a fine artistic sense, he made relentless war on pretentious mediocrity, and rendered good service to American letters by enforcing higher literary standards. He was lavish in his charges of plagiarism, even when stealing himself; and he made use of cheap, second-hand learning in order to ridicule the pretended scholarship of others. He often affected an irritating and contemptuous superiority. But with

all his humbug and superciliousness, his critical estimates, in the main, have been sustained.

The bright prospects before Poe were in a few months ruthlessly blighted. Perhaps he relied too much on his genius and reputation. It is easy for men of ability to overrate their importance. Regarding himself, perhaps, as indispensable to the *Messenger*, he may have relaxed in vigilant self-restraint. It has been claimed that he resigned the editorship in order to accept a more lucrative offer in New York; but the sad truth seems to be that he was dismissed on account of his irregular habits.

After eighteen months in Richmond, during which he had established a brilliant literary reputation, Poe was again turned adrift. He went to New York, where his story of "Arthur Gordon Pym" was published by the Harpers in 1838. It is a tale of the sea, written with the simplicity of style and circumstantiality of detail that give such charm to the works of Defoe. In spite of the fact that Cooper and Marryat had created a taste for sea-tales, the story of "Arthur Gordon Pym" never became popular. It is superabundant in horrors — a vein that had a fatal fascination for the morbid genius of Poe.

The same year in which this story appeared, Poe removed to Philadelphia, where he soon found work on *The Gentleman's Magazine*, recently established by the comedian Burton. He soon rose to the position of editor-in-chief, and his talents proved of great value to the magazine. His tales and criticism rapidly increased its circulation. But the actor, whose love of justice does him great credit, could not approve of his editor's sensational criticism. In a letter written when their cordial relations were interrupted for a time, Burton speaks very plainly and positively: "I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think is so 'successful with the mob.' I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly 'sensation' than I am upon the point of fairness. . . . You say the people love havoc. I

think they love justice." Poe did not profit by his experience at Richmond, and after a few months he was dismissed for neglect of duty.

He was out of employment but a short time. In November, 1840, *Graham's Magazine* was established, and Poe appointed editor. At no other period of his life did his genius appear to better advantage. Thrilling stories and trenchant criticisms followed one another in rapid succession. His articles on autography and cryptology attracted widespread attention. In the former he attempted to illustrate character by the handwriting; and in the latter he maintained that human ingenuity cannot invent a cipher that human ingenuity cannot resolve. In the course of a few months the circulation of the magazine (if its own statements may be trusted) increased from eight thousand to forty thousand—a remarkable circulation for the time.

His criticism was based on the rather violent assumption "that, as a literary people, we are one vast perambulating humbug." In most cases, literary prominence, he asserted, was achieved "by the sole means of a blustering arrogance, or of busy wriggling conceit, or of the most bare-faced plagiarism, or even through the simple immensity of its assumptions." These fraudulent reputations he undertook, "with the help of a hearty good will" (which no one will doubt), to "tumble down." But, in the fury of this general destruction, he did not allow himself to become utterly indiscriminate and merciless. He admitted that there were a few who rose above absolute "idiocy." "Mr. Morris *has* written good songs. Mr. Bryant is not *all* fool. Mr. Willis is not *quite* an ass. Mr. Longfellow *will* steal; but, perhaps, he cannot help it (for we have heard of such things), and then it must not be denied that *nil tetigit quod non ornavit*." But, in spite of reckless and extravagant assertion, there was still too much acumen and force in his reviews to allow them to be treated with indifference or contempt.

In about eighteen months Poe's connection with Graham

was dissolved. The reason has not been made perfectly clear; but, from what we already know, it is safe to charge it to Poe's infirmity of temper or of habit. His protracted sojourn in Philadelphia was now drawing to a close. It had been the most richly productive, as well as the happiest, period of his life. For a time, sustained by appreciation and hope, he in a measure overcame his intemperate habits. Griswold, his much-abused biographer, has given us an interesting description of him and his home at this time: "His manner, except during his fits of intoxication, was very quiet and gentlemanly; he was usually dressed with simplicity and elegance; and when once he sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was in a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the centre of the town; and, though slightly and cheaply furnished, everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius."

It was during his residence in Philadelphia that Poe wrote his choicest stories. Among the masterpieces of this period are to be mentioned "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Ligeia," which he regarded as his best tale, "The Descent into the Maelstrom," "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," and "The Mystery of Marie Roget." The general character of his tales may be inferred from their titles. Poe delighted in the weird, fantastic, dismal, horrible. There is no warmth of human sympathy, no moral consciousness, no lessons of practical wisdom. His tales are the product of a morbid but powerful imagination. His style is in perfect keeping with his peculiar gifts. He had a highly developed artistic sense. By his air of perfect candor, his minuteness of detail, and his power of graphic description, he gains complete mastery over the soul, and leads us almost to believe the impossible. Within the limited range of his imagination (for he was by no means the universal genius he fancied himself to be), he is unsurpassed, perhaps, by any other American writer.

Poe's career had now reached its climax, and after a time began its rapid descent. In 1844 he moved to New York, where for a year or two his life did not differ materially from what it had been in Philadelphia. He continued to write his fantastic tales, for which he was poorly paid, and to do editorial work, by which he eked out a scanty livelihood. He was employed by N. P. Willis for a few months on the *Evening Mirror* as sub-editor and critic, and was regularly "at his desk from nine in the morning till the paper went to press." It was in this paper, Jan. 29, 1845, that his greatest poem, "The Raven," was published with a flattering commendation by Willis. It laid hold of the popular fancy; and, copied throughout the length and breadth of the land, it met a reception never before accorded to an American poem. Abroad its success was scarcely less remarkable and decisive. "This vivid writing," wrote Mrs. Browning, "this power *which is felt*, has produced a sensation here in England. Some of my friends are taken by the fear of it, and some by the music. I hear of persons who are haunted by the 'Nevermore;' and an acquaintance of mine, who has the misfortune of possessing a bust of Pallas, cannot bear to look at it in the twilight."

In 1845 Poe was associated with the management of the *Broadway Journal*, which in a few months passed entirely into his hands. He had long desired to control a periodical of his own, and in Philadelphia had tried to establish a magazine. But, however brilliant as an editor, he was not a man of administrative ability; and in three months he was forced to suspend publication for want of means. Shortly afterwards he published in Godey's *Lady's Book* a series of critical papers entitled the "Literati of New York." The papers, usually brief, are gossipy, interesting, sensational, with an occasional lapse into contemptuous and exasperating severity.

In the same year he published a tolerably complete edition of his poems in the revised form in which they now appear in his works. The volume contained nearly all the poems upon

which his poetic fame justly rests. Among the poems that may be regarded as embodying his highest poetic achievement are "The Raven," "Lenore," "Ulalume," "The Bells," "Annabel Lee," "The Haunted Palace," "The Conqueror Worm," "The City in the Sea," "Eulalie," and "Israfel." Rarely has so large a fame rested on so small a number of poems, and rested so securely. His range of themes, it will be noticed, is very narrow. As in his tales, he dwells in a weird, fantastic, or desolate region — usually under the shadow of death. He conjures up unearthly landscapes as a setting for his gloomy and morbid fancies. In "The City in the Sea," for example,

"There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie."

He conformed his poetic efforts to his theory that a poem should be short. He maintained that the phrase "a long poem" "is simply a flat contradiction in terms." His strong artistic sense gave him a firm mastery over form. He constantly uses alliteration, repetition, and refrain. These artifices form an essential part of "The Raven," "Lenore," and "The Bells." In his poems, as in his tales, Poe was less anxious to set forth an experience or a truth than to make an impression. His poetry aims at beauty in a purely artistic sense, unassociated with truth or morals. It is singularly vague, unsubstantial, and melodious. Some of his poems — and precisely those in which his genius finds its highest expression — defy complete analysis. They cannot be taken apart so that each thought and sentiment stands out clear to the understanding. "Ulalume," for instance, remains obscure after the twentieth perusal — its meaning lost in a haze of mist and music. Yet these poems, when read in a sympathetic mood, never fail of their effect. They are genuine creations;

and, as fitting expressions of certain mental states, they possess an indescribable charm, something like the spell of instrumental music. There is no mistaking his poetic genius. Though not the greatest, he is still the most original, of our poets, and has fairly earned the high esteem in which his gifts are held in America and Europe.

During his stay in New York, Poe was often present in the literary gatherings of the metropolis. He was sometimes accompanied by his sweet, affectionate, invalid wife, whom in her fourteenth year he had married in Richmond. According to Griswold, "His conversation was at times almost supra-mortal in its eloquence. His voice was modulated with astonishing skill; and his large and variably expressive eyes looked repose or shot fiery tumult into theirs who listened, while his own face glowed, or was changeless in pallor, as his imagination quickened his blood or drew it back frozen to his heart. His imagery was from the worlds which no mortals can see but with the vision of genius." He exercised a strong fascination over women. "To a sensitive and delicately nurtured woman," wrote Mrs. Osgood, "there was a peculiar and irresistible charm in the chivalric, graceful, and almost tender reverence with which he invariably approached all women who won his respect." His writings are unstained by a single immoral sentiment.

Toward the latter part of his sojourn in New York, the hand of poverty and want pressed upon him sorely. The failing health of his wife, to whom his tender devotion is beyond all praise, was a source of deep and constant anxiety. For a time he became an object of charity—a humiliation that was exceedingly galling to his delicately sensitive nature. To a sympathetic friend, who lent her kindly aid in this time of need, we owe a graphic but pathetic picture of Poe's home shortly before the death of his almost angelic wife. "There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her hus-

band's great coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet." She died Jan. 30, 1847.

After this event Poe was never entirely himself again. The immediate effect of his bereavement was complete physical and mental prostration, from which he recovered only with difficulty. His subsequent literary work deserves scarcely more than mere mention. His "Eureka," an ambitious treatise, the immortality of which he confidently predicted, was a disappointment and failure. He tried lecturing, but with only moderate success. His correspondence at this time reveals a broken, hysterical, hopeless man. In his weakness, loneliness, and sorrow, he resorted to stimulants with increasing frequency. Their terrible work was soon done. On his return from a visit to Richmond, he stopped in Baltimore, where he died from the effects of drinking, Oct. 7, 1849.

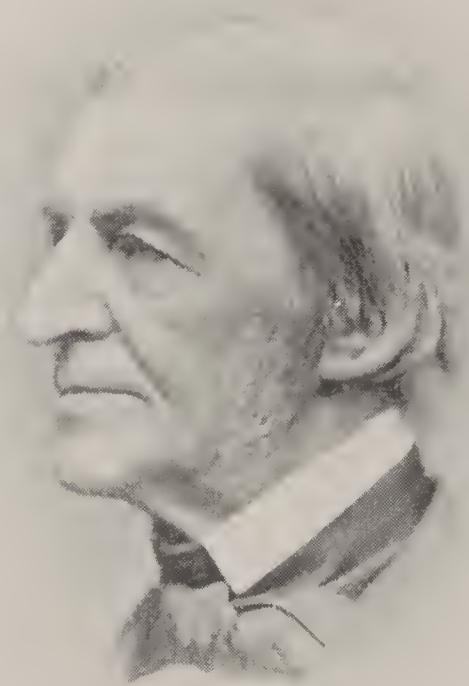
Thus ended the tragedy of his life. It is as depressing as one of his own morbid, fantastic tales. His career leaves a painful sense of incompleteness and loss. With greater self-discipline, how much more he might have accomplished for himself and for others! Gifted, self-willed, proud, passionate, with meagre moral sense, he forfeited success by his perversity and his vices. From his own character and experience he drew the unhealthy and pessimistic views to which he has given expression in the maddening poem, "The Conqueror Worm." And if there were not happier and nobler lives, we might well say with him, as we stand by his grave:—

"Out — out are the lights — out all!
And over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy 'Man,'
And its hero the Conqueror Worm."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

IN literature the historian records less of action than of thinking. Literature is a product of thought. The biography of many great writers is a story of "plain living and high thinking." This is pre-eminently true of Ralph Waldo Emerson. His outward life was uneventful. He filled no high civic or political station; he led no great reformatory movement that changed the character of society. His quiet, unostentatious life was devoted to the discovery and the proclamation of truth. As he said of Plato, his biography is interior. From time to time, as he felt called upon, he gave forth in essays, lectures, and poems, the choice treasures he had carefully stored up in retirement and silence.

He deserves to rank as one of our greatest thinkers. It should not be forgotten, however, that absolute originality is far less frequent than is sometimes supposed. As some writer has wittily said, the ancients have stolen our best thoughts. Other ages, no less than the present age, have had earnest, reflective souls. The same problems that press on us—nature, life, society, freedom, death, destiny—pressed on them for solution. In large measure the profound thinkers of the past have exhausted the field of speculative philosophy. "Out of Plato," says Emerson, "come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities." Only small advances can be made now and then, even by the children of genius. Emerson had a deep affinity for the imperial thinkers of our race. He made them his intimate friends, and assimilated their choicest thoughts. He settled the matter of plagiarism very simply. "All minds quote," he said. "Old and new make the warp



RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands. By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote."

Emerson was a philosopher only in the broad, original meaning of the word. He had but little power as a close, logical reasoner. He was incapable of building up a system. "I do not know," he says, "what arguments mean in reference to any expression of a thought. I delight in telling what I think; but if you ask me how I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men." He belongs to that higher class of men whom we revere as prophets or seers. His method was not logic, but intuition. In the pure light of genius, he saw the truth that he announced. His was "the oracular soul." He does not argue; he only states or reveals. He gives utterance to what is communicated to him, whether men will receive it or not.

There is an unbroken line of idealists and mystics running through the ages. While idealism and mysticism have often run into absurd extremes, they have fostered what is deepest and noblest in life — belief in God, in truth, and in immortality. The greatest representative of this idealistic tendency in the past was unquestionably Plato. Since his day there have been many others — Plotinus, Augustine, Eckhart, Tauler, Schelling, Coleridge — who have sought to transcend the realm of the senses, and to commune immediately with the Infinite. Emerson is the leading representative of this philosophy in America. It is the source of his inspiration and power; it contains in varied application the great message he had to deliver to our superficial, commercial, money-loving country. His principal essays and poems rest on a mystic sense of the all-originating and all-pervading presence of God — the source of all life, of all beauty, of all truth.

Yet it must be remembered that he was a New Englander as well as a transcendentalist. In spite of his idealism and mysticism, he never cut entirely loose from common sense. If at times he came perilously near ecstatic and unintelligible utter-

ance, he soon recovered his balance. His sturdy Puritan sense saved him. His mysticism never drove him out of his comfortable home into starving asceticism. It did not wholly paralyze his active energies. Notwithstanding his strivings after communion with the Over-soul, he was not so lost to the commonplace obligations of life as to neglect his family. It is true that he often grudged the time spent in attending to ordinary matters of business. "Do what I can," he said, "I cannot keep my eyes off the clock." But, unlike many another mystic, he did not let go of commonplace realities; and in spite of his addiction to ineffable communings, he was an estimable and useful citizen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was of Puritan descent, and counted seven ministers in the immediate line of his ancestry. Born in Boston, May 25, 1803, he may be considered the consummate flower of a healthy and vigorous stock. Nature seems to have seized upon the intellectual and ethical qualities of his Puritan ancestors, and to have wrought them into the solid foundation of his character. He was fitted for college in the public Latin School of Boston, and entered Harvard in 1817. He took high rank in his classes, delighted in general reading, and exhibited a gentle and amiable disposition. In his senior year he took the second prize in English composition, and at the conclusion of his course, in 1821, delivered the class-day poem.

After his graduation, Emerson devoted the next five years to teaching, and met with an encouraging degree of success. He is described by one of his pupils as being "very grave, quiet, and impressive in his appearance. There was something engaging, almost fascinating, about him; he was never harsh or severe, always perfectly self-controlled, never punished except with words, but exercised complete command over the boys." Along with his teaching, he pursued the study of theology under Channing, the great Unitarian leader and preacher. After three years of theological study he was "approbated to preach," though grave doubts had begun to trouble his mind. After spending a winter in South Carolina and

Florida for his health, he returned to Boston, and was ordained as colleague of the Rev. Henry Ware, pastor of the Second Unitarian Church. After the resignation of his colleague a few months later, Emerson became sole pastor, and performed his duties diligently and acceptably. With a broad and liberal spirit, he took an interest in the affairs of the city, served on the School Board, acted as chaplain of the State Senate, and co-operated in the philanthropic work of other denominations.

His sermons, both in matter and form, foreshadowed his lectures and essays. Their profound thought was clothed in simple but felicitous diction. His manner as a speaker was quiet, earnest, and impressive. His voice was peculiarly pleasing — “the perfect music of spiritual utterance.” A brilliant career lay before him in the pulpit. But, as is usual in such cases, his doubts in regard to certain points of Christian doctrine and traditional ceremonies increased. At last he came to feel conscientious scruples against administering the Lord’s Supper. His expanding views outgrew even the very spacious liberality of his church. Had he been a time-server or a hypocrite, he would have concealed his scruples. But a man of transparent integrity, he frankly avowed his difficulties to his people; and, finding the prevailing sentiment of the congregation against his views, he resigned his office, and gradually withdrew from the ministry. But on neither side was there any bitterness of feeling; and whatever errors there may have been in Christian doctrine, we must recognize the presence of the charity that “thinketh no evil.”

In 1833, the year following his resignation, he went to Europe for a few months, and visited Sicily, Italy, France, and England. He met a number of distinguished authors, among whom were Coleridge, De Quincey, Landor, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. A “quiet night of clear, fine talk” was the beginning of a warm friendship between him and Carlyle. His idealistic tendencies naturally made him partial to Wordsworth’s poetry, which was not without influence upon his intellectual development.

After his return from Europe, Emerson entered upon his new career as lecturer. For half a century he continued to appear upon the platform as a lecturer, and gradually made his way to a foremost place. He exemplified the truth of what De Quincey wrote: "Whatever is too original will be hated at the first. It must slowly mould a public for itself." When Emerson began to present his idealistic and mystical views, he was not generally understood. His philosophy was an exotic growth. By the prosaic multitude he was looked upon as mildly insane. James Freeman Clarke thus describes the general impression made by his earlier lectures: "The majority of the sensible, practical community regarded him as mystical, or crazy, or affected, as an imitator of Carlyle, as racked and revolutionary, as a fool, as one who did not himself know what he meant. A small but determined minority, chiefly composed of young men and women, admired him and believed in him, took him for their guide, teacher, master. I, and most of my friends, belonged to this class. Without accepting all his opinions, or indeed knowing what they were, we felt that he did us more good than any other writer or speaker among us, and chierly in two ways,—first, by encouraging self-reliance; and, secondly, by encouraging God-reliance."

Emerson was not, in the usual sense of the term, an eloquent speaker. He did not call to his aid the resources of intonation, gesture, and vehemence. But, in a spirit of earnestness and sincerity, he spoke his deepest convictions; and, in spite of his unimpassioned delivery, he was singularly impressive. His discourses were enveloped in an atmosphere of cheerful hopefulness that was especially helpful to the young. He believed in the ultimate triumph of truth over error, and inculcated a manly self-reliance and an absolute trust in God. Such a preacher (for he regarded the platform as his pulpit) could not fail to exert a profound influence upon many lives. James Russell Lowell has described for us the effect of Emerson's lectures on his younger hearers: "To some of us that long past experience remains the most marvellous and fruitful

we have ever had. Emerson awakened us, saved us from the body of this death. It is the sound of the trumpet that the young soul longs for, careless of what breath may fill it. Sidney heard it in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase,' and we in Emerson. Nor did it blow retreat, but called us with assurance of victory."

In 1829, a few months after becoming a pastor in Boston, Emerson married Miss Ellen Louisa Tucker. It is to her that the poem, "To Ellen at the South," is addressed. Apparently as delicate as the flowers that called to her in their devotion, she died of consumption in 1832. Three years later Emerson married Miss Lydia Jackson, and at once occupied the house at Concord in which he resided till his death. In this town of historic and literary associations, "He was surrounded by men," to use the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "who ran to extremes in their idiosyncrasies: Alcott in speculations, which often led him into the fourth dimension of mental space; Hawthorne, who brooded himself into a dream-peopled solitude; Thoreau, the nullifier of civilization, who insisted on nibbling his asparagus at the wrong end; to say nothing of idolaters and echoes. He kept his balance among them all." He became the most distinguished citizen of the place; and, as the years passed by, his home became the object of pious pilgrimages for his disciples and admirers. In 1836 he composed the "Concord Hymn," which was sung at the completion of the battle monument:—

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world."

For some years Emerson's studies had been in the line of idealistic and mystical philosophy. He gave much time to Plato; dipped into Plotinus and the German mystics; read with enthusiasm the poems of George Herbert, and the prose writings of Cudworth, Henry More, Milton, Jeremy Taylor,

and Coleridge. In 1836, as a result of these studies, he published a little volume entitled "Nature," which contained the substance of his subsequent teachings in both prose and poetry. It is based on a pure idealism, which teaches that matter is only a manifestation of spirit. "We learn that the Highest is present to the soul of man, that the dread universal Essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; that spirit is one, and not compound; that spirit does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves." The book was variously judged, according to the insight or prejudices of the critics. From its very nature it could not be popular, and some years elapsed before it reached a sale of five hundred copies.

The year "Nature" was published, the transcendental movement began to assume tangible form. Its representatives, drawn together by common sympathies and aspirations, organized themselves into a society for mutual aid and encouragement. This society was known as "The Transcendental Club," and held informal meetings from house to house for the discussion of philosophical questions. As a class the transcendentalists, among whom were Emerson, Alcott, Channing, George Ripley, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and others, were earnest in their search after truth. They were optimistic, and generally favorable to all sorts of reforms and innovations; but occasionally they were also extravagant and impractical — such people, in short, as in the hard realism of to-day are denominated cranks.

Transcendentalism is but another name for idealism. It recognizes an all-pervading spiritual presence as the ultimate reality. It is opposed to materialism. It teaches that man has a faculty transcending the senses and the understanding as an organ of truth. It believes in the existence of a Universal Reason, of which the human soul is an individual manifes-

tation—a divine spark. The highest knowledge is intuitional; it is an inspiration of the omnipresent Spirit. All things, animate and inanimate, are but a manifestation of infinite Spirit, which binds the universe together in a sublime unity, and is the source of all wisdom, truth, and beauty. The material world is the image or symbol of the spiritual world; all natural objects and laws are ideas of God.

It was for the dissemination of these philosophic principles, which now gave character to all of Emerson's thinking, that *The Dial* was established. It was edited at first by Margaret Fuller, and afterwards by Emerson, who furnished numerous contributions in both prose and poetry. Of course the magazine, with its vague and often unintelligible lucubrations, drew upon itself a good deal of hostile criticism. Emerson complained that it was "honored by attacks from almost every newspaper and magazine." Even Carlyle wrote: "I love your *Dial*, and yet it is with a kind of shudder. You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present Universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like,—into perilous altitudes, as I think." It proved too ethereal a plant for this hard, common-sense world, and after four years it died.

There was still another important product of the transcendental movement. In 1840 Emerson wrote to Carlyle: "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket. I am gently mad myself, and am resolved to live cleanly. George Ripley is talking up a colony of agriculturists and scholars, with whom he threatens to take the field and the book. One man renounces the use of animal food; and another, coin; and another, domestic hired service; and another, the state; and, on the whole, we have a commendable share of reason and hope." The following year Ripley's project took form in "The Brook Farm Association for Education and Agriculture." The object of the asso-

ciation, in the words of its originator, was "to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom by providing all with labor adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry." Its aim, in short, was to furnish a model of an ideal civilization, in which there would be the least possible manual toil, and the largest amount of intellectual and spiritual culture. Emerson, while looking on the experiment with friendly interest, held aloof from active participation. His profound knowledge of human nature seems to have inspired misgivings as to its practical workings. Yet when the Brook Farm Association came to an end in 1846, he pronounced it in its aims a noble and generous movement.

In 1841 Emerson published his first volume of "Essays," containing History, Self-Reliance, Compensation, Spiritual Laws, Love, Friendship, Prudence, Heroism, The Over-Soul, Circles, Intellect, and Art. Composed under the fresh inspiration of his idealism, these essays are unsurpassed in depth and richness by anything he subsequently wrote. Perhaps nothing more suggestive and inspiring has been produced in the whole range of American literature. But when the "Essays" appeared, New England did not breathe freely at such altitudes of speculation; and various critics, failing to catch its fundamental philosophy, stigmatized the book as vague, extravagant, meaningless.

It is worth while to dwell for a moment on this work. To understand it is to master Emerson. The first essay, on History, sounds the key-note to the whole series: "There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party

to all that is or can be done, for this is the only sovereign agent." The verses prefixed as a kind of motto or text embody the same idea:—

"There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all;
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere."

The following lines, presenting the same thought in more concrete form, will be found a little startling:—

"I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain."

In *Self-Reliance*, Emerson urges us to be true to our own thought, to trust our own conviction, to shake off all spiritual bondage. No less than other men, whether of the present age or former ages, we are organs of the Universal Reason. "We lie in the lap of immense Intelligence, which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, — all metaphysics, all philosophy, is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm." The same thought, which lies at the basis of nearly all his *Essays* in inexhaustible richness, is fully developed in *The Over-Soul*.

Emerson's life at this time was simple, busy, studious. He took a lively interest in his vegetable garden and in his little orchard of thirty trees. He had an income of about thirteen hundred dollars from invested funds, to which he added eight hundred dollars by his winter lectures. In a letter to Carlyle, dated May 10, 1838, he gives us a pleasing glimpse of his home life: "My wife Lydia is an incarnation of Christianity — I call her Asia — and keeps my philosophy from Antinomian-

ism; my mother, whitest, mildest, most conservative of ladies, whose only exception to her universal preference for old things is her son; my boy, a piece of love and sunshine, well worth my watching from morning to night, — these, and three domestic women, who cook and sew and run for us, make all my household. Here I sit and read and write, with very little system, and, as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary results: paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle.”

But, alas! this quiet abode of domestic joy was not to remain unsmitten. That idolized boy of five years — that “piece of love and sunshine” — was taken away. “A few weeks ago,” wrote the stricken father, “I accounted myself a very rich man, and now the poorest of all.” His grief blossomed in the “Threnody,” one of the noblest elegies ever written. To his overwhelming sorrow, doubt, and despair, “the deep Heart” back of all things at last spoke comfort and cheer: —

“Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know
 What rainbows teach, and sunsets show?
 Verdict which accumulates
 From lengthening scroll of human fates,
 Voice of earth to earth returned,
 Prayers of saints that inly burned, —
 Saying, *What is excellent*
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Hearts' love will meet thee again.”

In 1844 Emerson published a second volume of “Essays” in his characteristic vein. Almost every year, from the time he gave up his pastoral work, added to the list of his notable addresses. He brought his idealism to bear on various questions connected with theology, education, and government. In theology he drifted farther away from orthodox Unitarianism; and an address delivered before the senior class of Divinity College, Cambridge, in 1838, caused a sensation and started a controversy, in which he “had little more than the part of Pa-

troclus when the Greeks and Trojans fought over his body." He was not a controversialist, but a seer. He deplored the materialistic tendency of this rapidly developing commercial age, and raised his warning voice. In a college address in 1841 he declares that the thirst for wealth "acts like the neighborhood of a gold-mine to impoverish the farm, the school, the church, the house, and the very body and feature of man." His face was turned to the future with perpetual youth, and his message always carried with it encouragement and hope. He sympathized with every reformatory movement that promised a better social condition. He favored the abolition of slavery, and encouraged the movement for "woman's rights." In an address in 1855, he said: "The new movement is only a tide shared by the spirits of man and woman; and you may proceed in the faith that whatever the woman's heart is prompted to desire, the man's mind is simultaneously prompted to accomplish."

In 1847 Emerson made a second visit to England, and delivered a number of lectures to enthusiastic audiences. The best of these lectures he afterwards published under the title of "Representative Men." It is one of his most interesting and valuable works, intelligent even to the uninitiated. In 1856 appeared his "English Traits," in which he embodied the shrewd observation and interesting reflections of his sojourn in England. He was delighted with English life, which, of course, he saw on the best side; but he still preserved his equilibrium sufficiently to smile at a foible, or point out an unflattering truth. Of Emerson's other prose works, "The Conduct of Life," "Society and Solitude," "Letters and Social Aims," though meriting extended notice, no more than mere mention can be made.

In 1846 Emerson published his first volume of "Poems," and in 1867 appeared "May Day and Other Pieces." In spite of Matthew Arnold's judgment to the contrary, Emerson was a true poet, as well as an impressive lecturer and surpassing essayist. His poetry, no less than his prose, is pervaded by his

idealistic philosophy. In his admirable poem, "Wood-Notes," he thus speaks of nature:—

"Ever fresh the broad creation,
A divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds,
A single will, a million deeds."

As a product of spirit, the world is full of meaning. It is pervaded by a divine symbolism, which it is the office of the poet to read and interpret. Emerson calls the world "a temple, whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity." "Poetry," he says, "is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing." Nature is to him a continual revelation; hence he says in the little poem, "Good-by,"—

"And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?"

Emerson took his poetic office seriously. He considered poetry the highest vocation. "The poet," he says, "is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands at the centre. For the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe. Therefore the poet is not any permissive potentate, but is emperor in his own right." In "Merlin," Emerson says:—

"Thy trivial harp will never please
Or fill my craving ear;
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,
Free, peremptory, clear.
No jingling serenader's art,
Nor tinkle of piano strings,

Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs."

Impressed with the grandeur of the poet's vocation, Emerson was more or less indifferent to the art of versification. He rose above ingenious tricks and petty fancies. He has been called a poet "wanting the accomplishment of verse." He depended for success upon grandeur of thought, and truth of revelation. "For it is not metres," he says, "but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem, — a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing." Again in "Merlin," he says: —

"Great is the art,
Great be the manners, of the bard.
He shall not his brain encumber
With the coil of rhythm and number;
But, leaving rule and pale forethought,
He shall aye climb
For his rhyme."

Emerson was a loving student of nature. He reminds us of Wordsworth in his painstaking observation. His exquisite appreciation of natural beauty is often expressed in words nobly wedded to the sense. In "The Snow-Storm," the retiring north wind —

"Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow."

And again in "Wood-Notes:" —

"Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
But it carves the bow of beauty there,
And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake."

He deduces from the humblest objects in nature the richest lessons of practical wisdom. To him the humblebee is —

“Wiser far than human seer,
 Yellow-breeched philosopher.
 Seeing only what is fair,
 Sipping only what is sweet,
 Thou dost mock at fate and care,
 Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.”

He knew the sweet, soothing influence of nature, of which Bryant spoke. In “Musketaguid,” he says:—

“All my hurts
 My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,
 A quest of river grapes, a mocking thrush,
 A wild rose, or rock-loving columbine,
 Salves my worst wounds.”

Notwithstanding his treasures of beauty and wisdom, Emerson can hardly be a popular poet. He dwells in the higher regions of song. He must be content with a small but select audience. He does not deal in sentimentality—“poetry fit to be put round frosted cake;” he does not clothe his thought in the richest music of numbers. He is profoundly thoughtful; he earnestly strives to voice the speechless messages of the Over-soul. He grows upon us as we grasp more fully his meaning. Though not the most entertaining of our poets, he brings us the deepest and most helpful messages. His poetry, like his prose, brings courage and hope to burdened and struggling men. He calls them to sincerity, to faith, to truth. In the tasks that come to us, divine help is near:—

“So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
 So near is God to man,
 When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
 The youth replies, *I can*.”

If there are any who question this estimate, let them read, besides the poems already mentioned, “Each and All,” “The Problem,” “The Rhodora,” “Astræa,” “Sursum Corda,” “Ode

to Beauty," "Give All to Love," "Voluntaries," and many others.

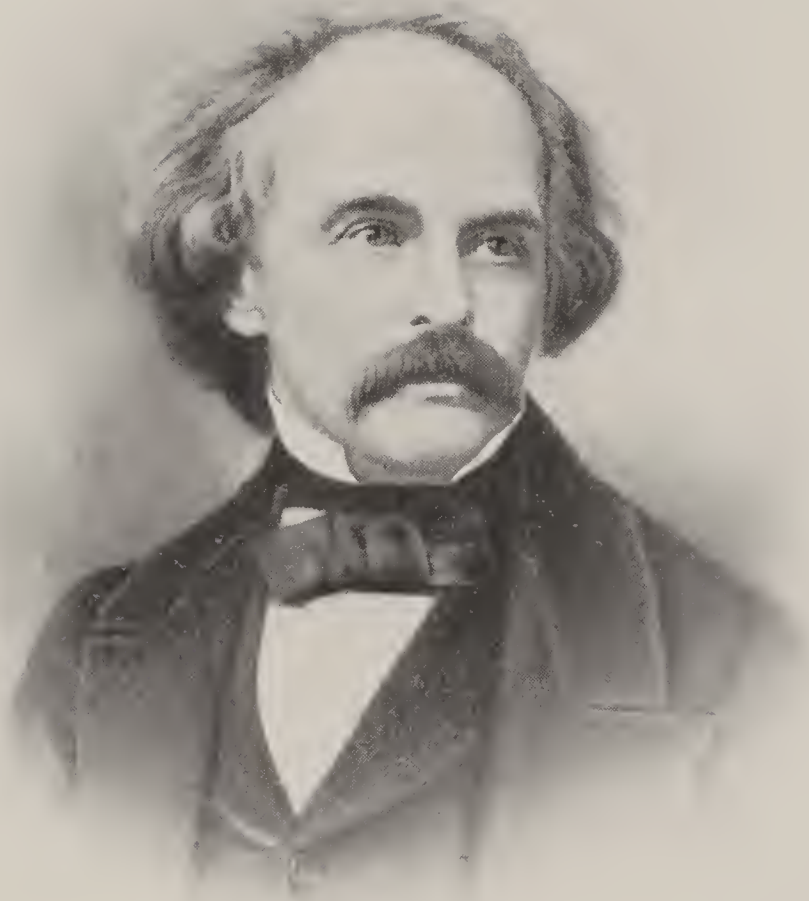
Emerson was peculiar in his literary methods. It is doubtful whether we have had another author so frugal in husbanding every thought. Besides the work done in his study day by day, he was accustomed to jot down in a note-book the stray thoughts that came to him in conversation or on his walks. The suggestions that occurred to him in his studies, conversations, and meditations he elaborated in a commonplace book, where he noted the subject of each paragraph. He thus preserved the best thoughts of his most fertile moments. When he had occasion to prepare an essay or a lecture, he brought together all the paragraphs relating to the subject in his commonplace books, supplying, at the same time, such new connective matter as might be necessary. This method will explain the evident absence of logical treatment in most of his writings, and also account for the fact, noted by Alcott, that "you may begin at the last paragraph and read backwards." Emerson subjected his writings to repeated and exacting revisions. Paragraphs were condensed, and every superfluous sentence and word were mercilessly pruned away. "Nowhere else," as Burroughs says, "is there such a preponderance of pure statement, of the very attar of thought, over the bulkier, circumstantial, qualifying, or secondary elements."

The year 1867 is indicated as about the limit of his working life. He gave pathetic expression to his experience in the poem entitled "Terminus : " —

" It is time to be old,
To take in sail : —
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said ' No more.' "

The closing years of his life resembled an ever-deepening twilight. Hearing, sight, memory, slowly but gradually gave

way. At last, April 27, 1882, surrounded by those he loved, he was beckoned "to his vaster home." Shall we not say that his life was beautiful? Men testified of him that he was radiant with goodness, that his presence was like a benediction, that he exhibited the meekness and gentleness of Christ. To have been such a man is better than to have been a great writer.



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

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It is not difficult to portray the lives of ordinary men. Their outward circumstances present nothing unusual, and their inward experiences admit of ready comprehension and description. All that is needed in such cases is diligent research. But it is different with the man upon whom Providence has lavished such a wealth of gifts as raises him high above his fellows. The outward incidents of his life may indeed be easily narrated. But when these have been presented in the fullest measure, how inadequate and unsatisfactory the portrait still remains ! That which distinguishes him from other men, and exalts him above them, is felt to be untouched. And when we essay to penetrate the secret of his genius, we are puzzled and baffled at every step. Only unsatisfactory glimpses reward our most patient observation. Strange and beautiful flowers may burst forth under our very gaze ; but the marvellous energy that produces them remains invisible and mysterious. These reflections force themselves upon us as we study the life of the most original and most gifted of all our American writers.

The interesting historic town of Salem, Mass., has the distinction of being the birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Here he first saw the light, July 4, 1804. He sprang from Puritan stock almost as old as the Plymouth colony. The strong traits of his ancestry, as he himself recognized, intertwined themselves with his personality. His ancestors occupied a position of social and official prominence, and won an unenviable distinction in persecuting Quakers and killing witches. For a hundred years before his birth they followed the sea ; “a gray-headed shipmaster, in each generation, retiring from

the quarterdeck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale, which had blustered against his sire and grand-sire." His father was a reserved, thoughtful man of strong will; his mother, a gifted, sensitive woman, who led the life of a recluse after her husband's death. These traits, as will be seen, were transmitted to their son in an intensified degree.

Only glimpses of his boyhood — brief, but very distinct — are afforded us. "One of the peculiarities of my boyhood," he tells us, "was a grievous disinclination to go to school, and (Providence favoring me in this natural repugnance) I never did go half as much as other boys, partly owing to delicate health (which I made the most of for the purpose), and partly because, much of the time, there were no schools within reach." One of his early teachers was Worcester of dictionary fame. He spent a year at Raymond on the banks of Sebago Lake in Maine, where he ran wild, hunting, fishing, skating, and reading at pleasure, — a period that subsequently remained with him as a happy memory. Returning to Salem, he was tutored for college, and entered Bowdoin in the autumn of 1821.

His college career cannot be cited as a model. "I was an idle student," he confesses, "negligent of college rules and the Procrustean details of academic life, rather choosing to nurse my own fancies than to dig into Greek roots and be numbered among the learned Thebans." He played cards on the sly; he drank (a student never drinks anything stronger) "wine" and "hard cider;" he went fishing and hunting when the faculty thought he was at his books. But in spite of his easy-going habits he maintained a respectable standing in his classes, and his Latin composition and his rendering of the classics were favorably spoken of. He was an exceedingly handsome young man; and it is said that an old gypsy woman, suddenly meeting him in a lonely forest path, was startled into the question, "Are you a man or an angel?" Among his college associates, who afterwards achieved distinction, were Henry W. Longfellow and Franklin Pierce.

The youth of Hawthorne gave no startling premonitions of future greatness. But there is evidence that he was not unconscious of his latent extraordinary powers; and some at least of his intimate friends discerned his literary gifts. In a letter to his mother, written in his boyhood, he says: "I do not want to be a doctor and live by man's diseases, nor a minister to live by their sins, nor a lawyer and live by their quarrels; so I don't see that there is anything left for me but to be an author. How would you like, some day, to see a whole shelf full of books written by your son, with 'Hawthorne's Works' printed on their backs?" To Horatio Bridge, an old and intimate friend, he says: "I know not whence your faith came; but while we were lads together at a country college, . . . doing a hundred things that the faculty never heard of, or else it had been the worse for us, still it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny that he was to be a writer of fiction."

His youthful reading was sufficiently extensive. "The Pilgrim's Progress," as with so many others, was a favorite book. He read Scott, Rousseau, and Froissart, though he was not fond of history in general. He loved poetry; and with catholic taste he studied Thomson and Pope, as well as Milton and Shakespeare. The first book he bought with his own money was "The Faerie Queene." But it can hardly be said that he was a great lover of books. He never made any pretence to scholarship, and there are few quotations in his writings. But he was one of the keenest observers; and the books he loved most were the forms of nature and the faces of men. These he read as it were by stealth; and, excepting the mighty Shakespeare, no one else ever read them more deeply. The quiet forest and the stirring city were to him great libraries, where he traced the almost invisible writing of the Creator. Thus, as he said of the simple husbandman in "The Great Stone Face," he "had ideas unlike those of other men, not gained from books, but of a higher tone, — a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends."

After his graduation, in 1825, Hawthorne returned to his

home in Salem, and for several years led a life of phenomenal seclusion and toil. His habits were almost mechanical in their regularity. He studied in the morning, wrote in the afternoon, and wandered by the seashore in the evening. He sedulously shunned society; and "destiny itself," he afterwards wrote, "has often been worsted in the attempt to get me out to dinner." But his recluse life should not be looked upon as gloomy and morbid. In pondering human life, he was indeed fond of the weird and the mysterious. He explored the hidden crypts of the soul. But his mind was far too healthy and strong to be weighed down with permanent gloom. He never lost his anchorage of common sense; and a genial humor cast its cheerful light upon his darkest musings.

During this period of retirement he was serving a laborious apprenticeship to his craft. Never was a writer more exacting in self-criticism. Much that he wrote was mercilessly consigned to the flames. In these years of painstaking toil, from which even the highest genius is not exempt, he acquired his exquisite sense of form, and his marvellous mastery of English. "Hawthorne's English," as Hillard says, "is absolutely unique; very careful and exact, but never studied; with the best word always in the best place; pellucid as crystal; full of delicate and varied music; with gleams of poetry, and touches of that peculiar humor of his, which is half smile and half sigh."

During the period in question he published in the *Token*, the *New England Magazine*, and other periodicals a considerable number of tales. They appeared anonymously, and attracted but little attention. Hawthorne had for a good many years what he called "the distinction of being the obscurest man of letters in America." It was a grievous disappointment and humiliation. In 1837 most of these scattered productions were brought together, and published in a volume with the happy title of "Twice-Told Tales." It had but a limited circulation. While it charmed a class of cultivated, reflective readers, its very excellence prevented it from becoming widely popular. In a review of the book. Longfellow, with clear, critical acumen,

said: "It comes from the hand of a man of genius. Everything about it has the freshness of morning and of May. These flowers and green leaves of poetry have not the dust of the highway upon them. They have been gathered fresh from the secret places of a peaceful and gentle heart. There flow deep waters, silent, calm, and cool; and the green trees look into them, and 'God's blue heaven.' The book, though in prose, is written, nevertheless, by a poet. He looks upon all things in the spirit of love and with lively sympathies; for to him external form is but the representation of internal being, all things having a life, and end and aim." This volume, together with a second series of "Tales" published in 1842, was in truth a remarkable contribution to American literature, and by its enduring interest, beauty, and truth, has since established itself as a classic.

The year 1838 brought an important change in Hawthorne's life. Under the Democratic administration of Van Buren, he was appointed weigher and gauger in the Boston Customhouse. It was well for him that he was thus called to common labor. He himself recognized that his life of seclusion had been sufficiently protracted. "I want to have something to do with this material world," he said. His new employment rescued him from the danger of becoming morbid, broadened his sympathies, and enriched his mind with new stores of observation and experience. He learned to know life, not as it may be conceived of in seclusion, but as it is in reality. Henceforth he was able to take up his pen with the conviction "that mankind was a solid reality, and that he himself was not a dream."

After two years of laborious and faithful service, during which his literary work was suspended, a change of administration resulted in his being turned out of office. He engaged in the socialistic experiment of Brook Farm; and, as we learn from his letters, he entered upon his new duties with considerable enthusiasm. He chopped hay with such "righteous vehemence" that he broke the machine in ten minutes. Armed

with a pitchfork he made what seemed to him a gallant attack upon a heap of manure. He turned grindstones and milked cows; hoed potatoes and picked apples; made hay and gathered squashes; and then for supper devoured huge mounds of buckwheat cakes. But at last his sense of humor, which kept him for a time from taking life at Brook Farm too seriously, began to fail him. His tasks became intensely prosaic; and finally he fell into the carnal state that made him welcome the idleness of a rainy day, or kept him on the sick-list longer than the necessities of the case actually required.

At Brook Farm, as elsewhere, Hawthorne not only made "a prey of people's individualities," to use his own phrase, but he observed nature also with microscopic vision. According to his custom, which he kept up through life, he stored his note-books with interesting observations and reflections. A few years later he etherealized his Brook Farm experience into the "Blithedale Romance," which ranks as one of his best productions. It was published in 1852. Though he protests in the preface against a too literal understanding of his romance, Margaret Fuller is thought to have furnished some traits of Zenobia; and it is impossible not to associate Hawthorne himself with Miles Coverdale. The following extract, which sets forth the cruel disillusion of the Brook Farm visionaries, is not fiction: "While our enterprise lay all in theory, we had pleased ourselves with delectable visions of the spiritualization of labor. It was to be our form of prayer and ceremonial of worship. Each stroke of the hoe was to uncover some aromatic root of wisdom, heretofore hidden from the sun. Pausing in the field to let the wind exhale the moisture from our foreheads, we were to look upward, and catch glimpses into the far-off soul of truth. In this point of view, matters did not turn out quite so well as we anticipated. . . . The clods of earth, which we so constantly belabored and turned over, were never etherealized into thought. Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the

evening. Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise."

Hawthorne remained at Brook Farm not quite a year. He returned to Boston, where he married Miss Sophia Peabody in 1842. The union was a peculiarly happy one. Mrs. Hawthorne was a gifted and amiable woman, who appreciated her husband's genius; and throughout their wedded career, which seems to have been unmarred by a single misunderstanding, she stood at his side as a wise counsellor, sympathetic friend, and helpful companion. Their correspondence, not only during the days of courtship, but also during the whole course of their wedded life, constantly breathes a spirit of delicate, tender, reverent love.

The newly wedded pair at once took up their residence in the Old Manse at Concord, where they numbered among their friends Emerson, Ellery Channing, and Thoreau. Hawthorne had not waited for wealth before marrying. It sometimes became a serious problem to satisfy the grocer and the butcher. But in spite of the cares growing out of their humble circumstances, the happy pair maintained a cheerful courage. "The other day," wrote Mrs. Hawthorne, "when my husband saw me contemplating an appalling vacuum in his dressing-gown, he said he was 'a man of the largest rents in the country, and it was strange he had not more ready money.' Our rents are certainly not to be computed; for everything seems now to be wearing out all at once. . . . But, somehow or other, I do not care much, because we are so happy. We —

‘Sail away
Into the regions of exceeding day,’

and the shell of life is not of much consequence."

In the introductory chapter to the "Mosses from an Old Manse," a delightful book made up of stories written for the most part at this period, Hawthorne gives us a minute description of his new home. The Old Manse had never been "profaned by a lay occupant," he says, "until that memorable

summer afternoon when I entered it as my home. A priest had built it, a priest had succeeded to it; other priestly men from time to time had dwelt in it, and children born in its chambers had grown up to assume the priestly character. It was awful to reflect how many sermons must have been written there. . . . There was in the rear of the house the most delightful little nook of a study that ever offered its snug seclusion to a scholar. It was here that Emerson wrote 'Nature;' for he was then an inhabitant of the Manse, and used to watch the Assyrian dawn and the Paphian sunset and moonrise from the summit of our eastern hill. When I first saw the room, its walls were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around. These worthies looked strangely like bad angels — or, at least, like men who had wrestled so continually and so sternly with the devil that somewhat of his sooty fierceness had been imparted to their own visages."

Hawthorne lived at Concord four years, a period of ripened manhood and deepened character. He was then appointed surveyor in the Custom-house at Salem, where he went to live in 1846. He was not very partial to his native town; and in one of his letters of an earlier date he gives humorous expression to his dislike: "Methinks, all enormous sinners should be sent on pilgrimage to Salem, and compelled to spend a length of time there, proportioned to the enormity of their offences. Such punishment would be suited to crimes that do not quite deserve hanging, yet are too aggravated for the State's prison." He discharged the duties of his office with exemplary fidelity. He did but little literary work; but he was not so entirely absorbed in his prosaic duties as not to make his customary but silent and unsuspected observations upon the characters of those about him.

In the introduction to "The Scarlet Letter," which was published in 1850, he gives an account of his custom-house experiences, and furnishes us a delightful series of portraits of his subordinates. Take, for example, a single trait in the char-

acter of the patriarch of the custom-house: "His gormandism was a highly agreeable trait; and to hear him talk of roast meat was as appetizing as a pickle or an oyster. As he possessed no higher attribute, and neither sacrificed nor vitiated any spiritual endowment by devoting all his energies and ingenuities to subserve the delight and profit of his maw, it always pleased and satisfied me to hear him expatiate on fish, poultry, and butcher's meat, and the most eligible methods of preparing them for the table. His reminiscences of good cheer, however ancient the date of the actual banquet, seemed to bring the savor of pig or turkey under one's very nostrils. There were flavors on his palate that had lingered there not less than sixty or seventy years, and were still apparently as fresh as the mutton-chop which he had just devoured for his breakfast. I have heard him smack his lips over dinners, every guest at which, except himself, had long been food for worms. . . . The chief tragic event of the old man's life, so far as I could judge, was his mishap with a certain goose which lived and died some twenty or forty years ago; a goose of most promising figure, but which at table proved so inveterately tough that the carving-knife would make no impression on its carcass, and it could only be divided with an axe and handsaw."

After three years a change of administration again led to Hawthorne's retirement. "Now you will have leisure to write your book," cheerfully exclaimed his wife, when he told her of his removal. When he asked what they would live on meanwhile, she led him to a desk, and proudly pointed to a heap of gold that she had saved out of her weekly allowance for household expenses. He set to work at once upon "The Scarlet Letter," perhaps the best known of his writings, and the most subtle and powerful piece of fiction produced in this country. It is a tragedy of sin and remorse, in which thoughts are acts. Its extraordinary merits were at once recognized, and at a single bound Hawthorne attained the literary eminence that his genius deserved. His day of obscurity was

past; the praises of "The Scarlet Letter" in America were re-echoed in England. This enthusiastic reception of his work, which his frequent disappointments had not prepared him for, brought him satisfaction and encouragement. It seems to have acted upon him as a stimulus to renewed effort; and the years immediately following were the most productive of his life. Even the greatest genius needs the encouragement of appreciation.

In 1850, the year in which "The Scarlet Letter" appeared, Hawthorne moved to Lenox in western Massachusetts. He occupied a small red cottage, which, but for its commanding view of mountain, lake, and valley, could not have been considered in keeping with his gifts and fame. His limited means still enforced simplicity of living. Here he wrote "The House of the Seven Gables," one of his four great romances, which was published in 1851. It was written, as were most of his works, to set forth a spiritual truth. The story was never with Hawthorne the principal thing. It was simply the skeleton, which he clothed with the flesh of thought and vitalized with the breath of truth. "The House of the Seven Gables" illustrates the great truth "that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the succeeding ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief."

While at Lenox, Hawthorne wrote also his "Wonder-Book" for boys and girls, a beautifully modernized version of ancient classic myths. Though intended for children, it is not without interest for older people. With his growing popularity his financial condition improved; and in 1852 he purchased a house at Concord, formerly owned by Alcott, to which he gave the name of the Wayside. Here he took up his abode, and completed his "Tanglewood Tales," another admirable volume intended for young people. Upon the nomination of his friend Franklin Pierce for the presidency, he consented, not without urgent solicitation, to prepare a campaign biography. It is characterized by good taste and sobriety of judgment. After

the election of Pierce, he received the appointment of consul to Liverpool, and sailed for Europe in 1853.

This opportunity to spend some time abroad came to the Hawthornes as the realization of a long-cherished dream. Few Americans have been better fitted in culture to appreciate and enjoy the society, historic associations, and art treasures of the Old World. Though Hawthorne discharged the duties of his position with conscientious fidelity, its emoluments, which were considerable, constituted its principal charm. "I disliked my office from the first," he says, "and never came into any good accordance with it. Its dignity, so far as it had any, was an encumbrance; the attentions it drew upon me (such as invitations to mayors' banquets and public celebrations of all kinds, where, to my horror, I found myself expected to stand up and speak) were — as I may say without incivility or ingratitude, because there is nothing personal in that sort of hospitality — a bore. The official business was irksome, and often painful. There was nothing pleasant about the whole affair, except the emoluments."

As at Salem, Hawthorne kept his eyes open to his surroundings, and filled his note-books with many charming incidents and descriptions. At intervals he made brief excursions to the most noted parts of England. His literary fame caused him to be much sought after, and he saw the most distinguished men of the time. Like Irving, he entertained a friendly feeling toward the mother-country, which he fondly calls, in a work recording his experience and impressions, "Our Old Home." But he had no disposition, as he said, to besmear our self-conscious English cousins with butter and honey. "These people," he says, "think so loftily of themselves, and so contemptuously of everybody else, that it requires more generosity than I possess to keep always in perfectly good humor with them."

After five years Hawthorne resigned the consulate at Liverpool, and then devoted two years to travel, chiefly in France and Italy. It was a period of rest, observation, and reflection.

The art treasures of Rome, as well as its historic associations, were a source of exquisite pleasure. His Italian impressions he embodied in the last of his great romances, "The Marble Faun." It was sketched out in Italy, rewritten in England, and published in 1860. It abounds in art criticism and descriptions of Italian scenery. But through it all there runs a deathless story, with the profound moral that a perfect culture is unattainable in a state of innocence, and that the noblest character can be developed only through spiritual conflict.

Hawthorne had a deep sense of human sin and guilt. It enters into many of his writings, and tinges them with a sombre hue. His works appeal most to those who have been chastened in toil and suffering. He everywhere breathes a spirit of tender sympathy, from which no one, however erring and fallen, is excluded. "Man," he says, "must not disclaim his brotherhood even with the guiltiest, since, though his hand be clean, his heart has surely been polluted by the flitting phantoms of iniquity." In the conflicts and sufferings of humanity he recognized the struggle of the race after a better and purer life than has yet been realized on earth.

The year "The Marble Faun" appeared, Hawthorne returned to his native country, and made his home once more at the Wayside. But the fire of genius was burning low. He no longer enjoyed robust health; and, while the country was engaged in the throes of civil war, he found it impossible to give himself to the calm, secluded task of inventing stories. No other great work came from his magic pen. He indeed essayed other achievements: but "Septimius Felton" was never finished, and "The Dolliver Romance" remained a fragment. His health gradually declined. At last, in the faint hope of improvement, he started with his lifelong friend Pierce on a journey through northern New England. But the sudden death that he had desired came to him at Plymouth, N.H., May 19, 1864. A few days later he was laid to rest with Thoreau in the cemetery at Concord.

This survey of Hawthorne's life and work enables us to

distinguish some of the elements that entered into his unique character. His piercing vision gave him a deep sense of spiritual reality. Like every finely organized nature, he was profoundly reverent. In the seclusion of his chamber and on his lonely rambles he felt what he calls "the spirit's natural instinct of adoration towards a beneficent Father." This was the secret of his independence and of his loyalty to truth. His ideals were lofty, and any departure from the strictest integrity of thought or act appeared to him in the light of treason. With his eye constantly fixed on the realities of life, he demanded everywhere the most perfect sincerity. Few men have ever had a more cordial contempt for every form of pretence and hypocrisy. He was a keen reader of character, and only true and honest natures were admitted to the sacred intimacy of his friendship. His tastes were almost feminine in their delicacy. He had an exquisite appreciation of the beauties of nature and art. He caught their secret meaning. Retiring and modest in disposition, he loathed the vulgarity of every form of obtrusiveness. He was peculiarly gentle in manner and in spirit; but it was that noble gentleness born, not of weakness, but of conscious power. His reflective temperament had a predilection for the darker and more mysterious side of life. He fathomed the lowest depths of the soul. As we read his romances and tales, we have a new sense of the meaning and mystery of existence.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

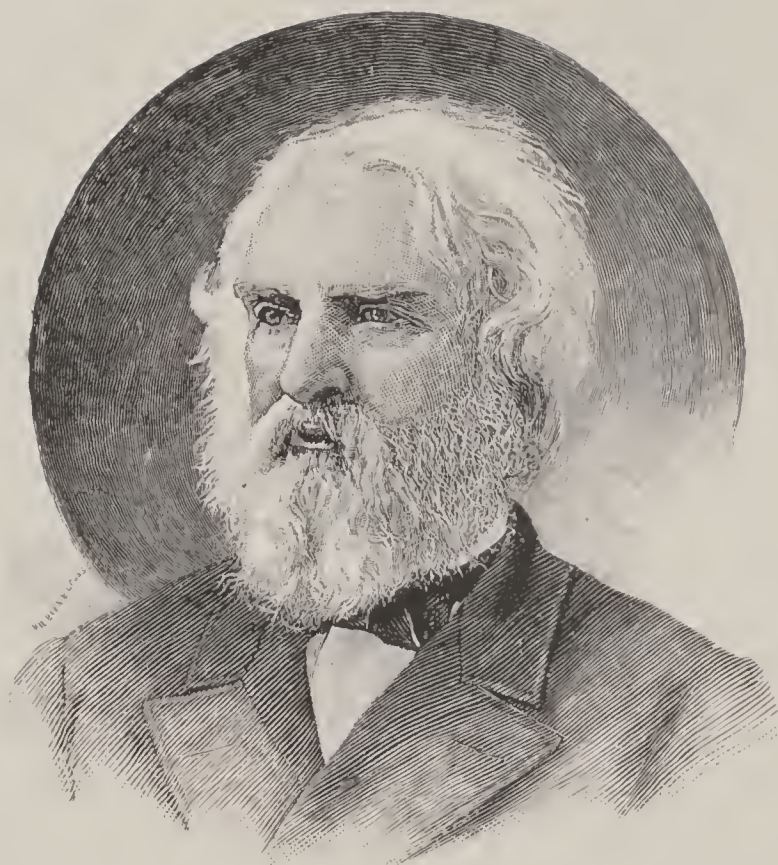
LONGFELLOW has gained an enviable place in the affections of the American people ; and in England his works, it is said, have a wider circulation than those of Tennyson. This popularity has not been attained by brilliancy of genius. There have been more exquisitely gifted poets, who by no means have held so large a place in public esteem. The highest genius is perhaps excluded from popularity by its very originality. Longfellow, while possessing poetic gifts of a high order, has treated themes of general interest. He has wrought within the range of ordinary thought and sentiment.

His life was beautiful in its calm, gradual, healthful development. It was not unlike the river Charles, of which he sang : —

“ Oft in sadness and in illness,
I have watched thy current glide,
Till the beauty of its stillness
Overflowed me like a tide.

And in bitter hours and brighter,
When I saw thy waters gleam,
I have felt my heart beat lighter,
And leap onward with thy stream.”

His life was itself a poem — a type of all that he has written. It was full of gentleness, courtesy, sincerity, and manly beauty. It was free from eccentricity; it breathed a large sympathy; it grounded itself on invisible and eternal realities. The message he brought was sane and helpful. He did not aim at the solution of great problems; he was not ambitious to fathom the lowest depths. But for half a century he contin-



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

ued to send forth, in simple, harmonious verse, messages of beauty, sympathy, and hope.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Me., Feb. 27, 1807. He sprang from a sturdy, honorable New England family, the founder of which came to Massachusetts toward the close of the seventeenth century. His father was a graduate of Harvard, a prominent lawyer in Portland, and at one time a member of Congress. The poet inherited the disposition and manners of his father, who has been described as a man "free from everything offensive to good taste or good feeling." On his mother's side the poet counted in his ancestral line John Alden and Priscilla Mullen, whom he has immortalized in "The Courtship of Miles Standish." While his ancestors on both sides were characterized by strong sense and sterling integrity, there was no indication of latent poetic genius. Its sudden appearance in the subject of our sketch is one of those miracles of nature that cannot be fully explained by any law of heredity.

During the early years of his life, Portland possessed the charm of beautiful scenery and stirring incident. The city rises by gentle ascent from Casco Bay. Its principal streets are lined with trees, so that it has been not inaptly called "The Forest City." Back of the town are the stately trees of Deering's Woods. It was a place of considerable commercial importance, and foreign vessels and strange-tongued sailors were seen at its wharves. In the War of 1812 defensive works were erected on the shore. In a naval combat off the coast between the British brig Boxer and the United States brig Enterprise, the captains of both vessels lost their lives. The deep impression made by these scenes and associations is reflected in the beautiful poem, "My Lost Youth."

Longfellow entered Bowdoin College at the age of fifteen. He was courteous in his bearing, refined in his tastes, and studious in his habits. A classmate, writing of him a half-century later, says, "He was an agreeable companion, kindly and social in his manner, rendering himself dear to his associates

by his disposition and deportment." He held a very high rank in a large and able class. His strong literary bent manifested itself early. During his college course he composed a number of poems of marked excellence, a few of which have been given a place in his "Complete Poetical Works." All young writers are apt to be more or less imitative; and in the poems of this period, especially in those treating of nature, the influence of Bryant is clearly perceptible.

He early showed a strong predilection for a literary career. In his eighteenth year he wrote to his father: "The fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it. There may be something visionary in this, but I flatter myself that I have prudence enough to keep my enthusiasm from defeating its own object, by too great haste. . . . Whether nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has, at any rate, given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits; and I am almost confident in believing that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature."

After his graduation in 1825, Longfellow began the study of law in his father's office; but, like several other American authors, he found his legal books exceedingly tedious. Soon the way was opened for him to enter upon the literary career for which he was eminently fitted by taste and talents. While at college his linguistic ability had attracted attention. Accordingly, when the department of modern languages was established at Bowdoin, he was elected professor, and granted leave of absence for travel and study abroad. He sailed for Europe in 1826, and spent the next three years in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, and England. He studiously familiarized himself with the scenery, customs, language, and literature of those countries. Like Paul Flemming in "Hyperion," "He worked his way diligently through the ancient poetic lore of Germany, from Frankish legends of St. George and Saxon Rhyme-Chronicles, . . . into the bright, sunny land

of harvests, where, amid the golden grain and the blue corn-flowers, walk the modern bards, and sing." After his return, he taught five years in his *Alma Mater* with eminent success.

One of the fruits of his stay abroad was a little work in prose entitled "Outre Mer," in which he gave some of the "scenes and musings" of his pilgrimage. It is made up of a series of pleasant sketches in the manner of Irving's "Sketch Book." It was written, as he tells us, when the duties of the day were over, and the world around him was hushed in sleep. "And as I write," he concludes, "the melancholy thought intrudes upon me, — To what end is all this toil? Of what avail these midnight vigils? Dost thou covet fame? Vain dreamer! A few brief days, — and what will the busy world know of thee? Alas! this little book is but a bubble on the stream; and, although it may catch the sunshine for a moment, yet it will soon float down the swift-rushing current, and be seen no more!"

In 1831 he married Miss Mary Storer Potter of Portland, a lady of great personal attractions and of exceptional culture. Their married life was brief. She accompanied him on his second visit to Europe, where she died in Rotterdam in November, 1835. She is the "being beauteous" commemorated in the "Footsteps of Angels:" —

"With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes the messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air."

Longfellow's reputation as a teacher and writer was not confined to Brunswick. He was generally recognized as a rising man; and hence, when the chair of modern languages and literature became vacant at Harvard by the resignation of Professor George Ticknor, he was called to Cambridge. But before entering upon his duties there, he again went abroad, and spent two years in study. In "*Hyperion*," his second prose work, he gave a poetic diary of his wanderings abroad. Its style is somewhat dainty and artificial, but in excellent keeping with its quaint scholarship. It repeats old legends, translates delightful lyrics, indulges in easy criticism, abounds in graphic descriptions, and admirably reproduces the spirit of German life. Now and then a serious reflection affords us a glimpse into the depths of thought and feeling beneath the facile narrative. The book is still eagerly bought, we are told, at the principal points it commemorates.

In 1836 Longfellow returned to this country, and took up his residence in the Craigie house in Cambridge. Though it already possessed historic interest as at one time Washington's headquarters, it was destined to become still more illustrious as the home of the poet. The beauty of its surroundings rendered it no unfit abode for the Muses. With reference to its former majestic occupant, the poet says:—

"Once, ah, once within these walls,
One whom memory oft recalls,
The Father of his Country, dwelt.
And yonder meadows broad and damp
The fires of the besieging camp
Encircled with a burning belt."

For seventeen years he faithfully discharged his duties as head of the department of modern languages at Harvard. His position was not a sinecure. Though his lectures were prepared with great care, they were seldom written out in full. He cared but little for the soulless, mechanical learning that consists in a knowledge of insignificant details. He wrought

with profounder spirit. He introduced his students into the beauty of foreign literature, and awakened a desire for literary study and culture.

He became a prominent figure in the remarkable group of Cambridge scholars and writers. His friendships were select and warm. His relations with Felton, Hawthorne, and Sumner were particularly close, as may be seen in the series of sonnets entitled "Three Friends of Mine." There is deep pathos in the concluding lines : —

" But they will come no more,
Those friends of mine, whose presence satisfied
The thirst and hunger of my heart. Ah me!
They have forgotten the pathway to my door!
Something is gone from nature since they died,
And summer is not summer, nor can be."

Among his other intimate friends may be mentioned Lowell and Agassiz, both of whom find affectionate remembrance in his poems.

In 1839, the year in which "Hyperion" appeared, Longfellow published a slender volume of poetry entitled "Voices of the Night." For the first time the public was able to form a fair idea of the qualities of the new singer. The key-note of the poems is given in the "Prelude : " —

" Look, then, into thine heart, and write!
Yes, into Life's deep stream!
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn Voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright,
Be these henceforth thy theme."

The poet struck a sympathetic chord, and several of the poems have since remained popular favorites. Every poem in the collection has a personal interest. "A Psalm of Life," so familiar for two generations, is the voice of courage that came into the poet's heart as he was rallying from the depression of bereavement. "The Reaper and the Flowers," which

was the unlabored expression of a long-cherished idea, he wrote, as he tells us, "with peace in his heart, and not without tears in his eyes." The pathetic interest of "Footsteps of Angels" has already been mentioned.

Two years later appeared another small volume with the title, "Ballads and Other Poems." It reveals an expansion of the poet's powers. "The Skeleton in Armor" rests upon an interesting historical basis. "The Wreck of the Hesperus" is written in the old ballad style, the spirit of which it successfully reproduces. After the wreck, for example, —

"At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise."

In "The Village Blacksmith," we catch the beauty and excellence of a life of humble, faithful labor —

"Toiling, — rejoicing, — sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose."

The little poem, "Excelsior," has a deeper meaning than appears on the surface. The poet's intention, as explained by himself, was "to display, in a series of pictures, the life of a man of genius, resisting all temptations, laying aside all fears, heedless of all warnings, and pressing right on to accomplish his purpose."

In these two initial volumes we have the fundamental characteristics of Longfellow's verse. His poetry afterwards swept a wide range; he undertook more ambitious themes, and gained in amplitude of genius. But in its essential features, his po-

etry always retained the same qualities. His verse is simple, smooth, melodious, serious. He had learned from German lyrists — Heine, Müller, Uhland — the effectiveness of simple measures; and no other poetic forms would have been suited to his range of thought and emotion. His poetry was but the reflex of the man himself. To use the words of Curtis, “What he was to the stranger reading in distant lands, by —

‘The long wash of Australasian seas,’

that he was to the most intimate of his friends. His life and character were perfectly reflected in his books. There is no purity, or grace, or feeling, or spotless charm in his verse which did not belong to the man.”

In Europe he steeped himself in mediæval literature. He familiarized himself with its wonderful legends. He breathed the romantic spirit that had recently brought new life into the literature of Germany, France, and England. Discarding conventionality, he strove to be true to nature. With true poetic discernment, he pointed out the beauty and pathos of human life. His poetry does not display erratic brilliancy; it does not suddenly blaze out in meteoric splendor, and then sink into darkness. It breathes an atmosphere of faith, hope, and courage. Longfellow does not indeed rise to the rank of the greatest masters of song. But whatever he has lost in admiration, he has more than gained in the higher tribute of love.

The year 1843 is notable in the poet's life for three things. The first was the publication of “The Spanish Student,” a pleasant drama intended for reading rather than acting. Its characters are drawn with sufficient clearness; and Preciosa, the gypsy dancing-girl, is a charming creation. The play exhibits the poet's intimate knowledge of Spanish character and customs, and is full of interesting incident and passionate poetry. The second event was the appearance of his small collection of “Poems on Slavery.” He was not an agitator; his modest, retiring nature unfitted him for the tasks of a bold,

popular leader. But, during the agitation of the great slavery question, he was not an entirely passive spectator. Through his anti-slavery poems, which set forth strongly the darker side of slavery, he lent the weight of his influence to the friends of emancipation. In the light of subsequent events, the last stanza of "The Warning" seems almost like prophecy:—

"There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
Till the vast Temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies."

The third event of the year was the poet's marriage to Miss Frances Elizabeth Appleton of Boston, the original of Mary Ashburton in "Hyperion." She was fitted in mind and person to walk at the poet's side; and years afterwards, when surrounded by her five children, she was described as a Cornelia in matronly beauty and dignity.

In 1845 appeared "Poets and Poetry of Europe," a large volume containing nearly four hundred translations from ten different languages. In its preparation, which occupied him nearly two years, he had the assistance of his friend Professor Felton. In December of the same year he published "The Belfry of Bruges, and Other Poems," in which appears some of his best work. The initial poem and "Nuremberg" are admirable "poems of places." "The Day is Done" has long been a general favorite; and, excepting the unfortunate simile in the first stanza, it is almost faultless in its simplicity and beauty. "The Arsenal at Springfield" deservedly ranks among the best of his shorter poems. It is quite "warlike against war," and expresses faith in its ultimate banishment from the earth:—

"Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter, and then cease;
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say 'Peace.'"

Among the other poems of this collection deserving especial notice is "The Old Clock on the Stairs." The old-fashioned country-seat commemorated in the poem was the homestead of Mrs. Longfellow's maternal grandfather, whither the poet went for a short time after his marriage in 1843.

Two years later appeared "Evangeline," which Holmes regards as our author's masterpiece, — a judgment sustained by general opinion. The story Longfellow owed to Hawthorne, to whom he gracefully wrote after the publication and success of the poem: "I thank you for resigning to me that legend of Acady. This success I owe entirely to you, for being willing to forego the pleasure of writing a prose tale which many people would have taken for poetry, that I might write a poem which many people take for prose." The metre is dactylic hexameter, which has had great difficulty in naturalizing itself in English poetry. Longfellow, who had made previous experiments in this measure, did not share the common prejudice against it. "The English world," he wrote, "is not yet awake to the beauty of that metre." He was, perhaps, encouraged by the success of Goethe in "Hermann and Dorothea." The result has amply sustained the poet's judgment. The story could hardly have been so delightful in any other measure. He has himself made the test in a single passage. In the second canto of Part Second, the singing of the mocking-bird is described as follows: —

"Then from a neighboring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest of singers,
Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the water,
Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves seemed silent to listen.
Plaintive at first were the tones, and sad; then soaring to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied Bacchantes.
Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower on the branches."

In comparison with this, how tame the following rendering in the common English rhymed pentameter: —

“Upon a spray that overhung the stream,
The mocking-bird, awaking from his dream,
Poured such delirious music from his throat
That all the air seemed listening to his note.
Plaintive at first the song began, and slow;
It breathed of sadness, and of pain and woe;
Then, gathering all his notes, abroad he flung
The multitudinous music from his tongue, —
As, after showers, a sudden gust again
Upon the leaves shakes down the rattling rain.”

It is not to be supposed that Longfellow escaped criticism. His success and popularity excited envy, and Poe especially was relentless in his attacks. He labored hard but ineffectually to establish his favorite charge of plagiarism. The transcendentalists were scant in their praise. Though Longfellow counted some of their leading representatives among his friends, his poetry shows scarcely a trace of transcendentalism. His simple themes and familiar truths seemed elementary and trivial to the transcendentalists. The editor of the *Dial* irreverently described him as “a dandy Pindar.” But the poet endured harsh criticism with rare equanimity. He never replied to any criticism, no matter how unjust or severe. When critiques were sent to him, he read only those which were written in a pleasant spirit. The rest he dropped into the fire; and “in that way,” he remarked, “one escapes much annoyance.”

After the publication of “Evangeline,” the poet’s muse was less productive for a time; and he himself lamented that the golden days of October, usually so fruitful in verse, failed to stir him to song. Still, it was not a period of complete inactivity. He amused himself in writing the prose tale of “Kavanaugh,” which, in spite of Hawthorne’s generous praise, has remained the least popular of his works. By 1849 he accumulated sufficient verse for a slender volume, which was published under the title of “The Seaside and the Fireside.” Among the sea-pieces, which show the poet’s fondness for the ocean, “The Building of the Ship” is most worthy of notice. It is mod-

elled after Schiller's "Song of the Bell;" and in its details, as in its general plan, it is admirably conceived and wrought out.

"His heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every art."

Among the fireside pieces, "Resignation" has been read with tears in many a mourning household. It was written after the death of the poet's little daughter Fanny, of whom he noted in his diary: "An inappeasable longing to see her comes over me at times, which I can hardly control." He found consolation only in the great truth of immortality.

"There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death.

She is not dead, — the child of our affection, —
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule."

His numerous works now brought the poet a comfortable income. With increasing devotion to literary work, he found the exacting duties of the class-room irksome. Accordingly, in 1854, he resigned his chair in Harvard College. He was in his intellectual prime, and several of his greatest works were yet to be written. About the time of his resignation the idea of "Hiawatha" occurred to him; and he wrote in his diary: "I have at length hit upon a plan for a poem on the American Indians, which seems to me the right one and the only. It is to weave together their beautiful traditions into a whole. I have hit upon a measure too, which I think the right and only one for such a theme." The peculiar trochaic metre, with its repetitions and parallelisms, was suggested by the Finnish epic "Kalevala," to which also, in some slight degree, he seems otherwise indebted. The legends of the poem were taken from Schoolcraft. Longfellow worked at the poem with great inter-

est and industry, and finished it in nine months. But, as it approached completion, he was troubled with grave doubts as to the success of his novel venture. Its publication in 1855 created something of a literary sensation. Never before, perhaps, was a poem so criticised, parodied, and ridiculed. When most fiercely assailed, the poet preserved his usual equanimity and silence. "My dear Mr. Longfellow," exclaimed his excited publisher, rushing into the poet's study, "these atrocious libels must be stopped." Longfellow silently glanced over the attacks in question. As he handed the papers back, he inquired, "By the way, Fields, how is 'Hiawatha' selling?" "Wonderfully," was the reply; "none of your books has ever had such a sale." "Then," said the poet calmly, "I think we had better let these people go on advertising it." The poem finally established itself as a general favorite — a position which it deserves. To remove any doubts, it will be sufficient to read "Hiawatha's Wooing," with its familiar opening lines:—

As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys him;
Though she draws him, yet she follows;
Useless each without the other."

At this period the poet was abundant in labors. Scarcely was one work off the anvil till another was taken up. After the publication of "Hiawatha," the success of which was encouraging, he turned his attention to a New England colonial theme. "The Courtship of Miles Standish" rests upon a trustworthy tradition. The Pilgrims of Plymouth were less austere than the Puritans of Boston. Their sojourn in Holland had softened somewhat their temper and manners. The poem reproduces the manners of the early colonial times with sufficient accuracy. It is less ideal than "Evangeline;" and its realism renders its hexameters more rugged. The reply of the Puritan maiden Priscilla, as John Alden was pleading the cause of his rival, was not a poetic fiction:—

“But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, ‘Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?’”

“The Courtship of Miles Standish” was published in 1858, along with a number of miscellaneous poems, several of which deserve especial mention. “The Ladder of St. Augustine” contains the well-known stanza:—

“The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”

“The Two Angels,” a poem of tender pathos, was written, as the poet tells us, “on the birth of my younger daughter, and the death of the young and beautiful wife of my neighbor and friend, the poet Lowell.” For the dark problem of life he finds but the one solution of absolute trust in Providence:—

“Angels of life and death alike are his;
Without his leave they pass no threshold o’er;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door?”

The poem, “Children,” like the later one, “The Children’s Hour,” reveals to us the poet’s tender, sympathetic nature:—

“For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.”

In 1861 an awful calamity befell the poet. His wife was so severely burned, in spite of his efforts to extinguish the

flames, that she died in a few hours. He was for a time prostrated by the blow. When he began to recover, he sought, like Bryant, relief from his sorrow in the work of translation. Throughout life he found pleasure in turning the thoughts of foreign poets into his native tongue. His various lyrical versions are sufficient to fill a good-sized volume. But he now gave himself to the serious task of turning Dante's "*Divina Commedia*," of which he had long been a devout student, into English verse. The translation closely follows the original, and is, perhaps, the most satisfactory version of the great Italian in our language.

The first series of "*Tales of a Wayside Inn*" was published in 1863, the two succeeding parts appearing in 1872 and 1873. The plan is obviously borrowed from Boccaccio and Chaucer. The Wayside Inn was an old tavern at Sudbury, and the characters supposed to be gathered there were all real. The youth —

"Of quiet ways,
A student of old books and days,"

was Henry Ware Wales, a liberal benefactor of Harvard College. The young Sicilian was Professor Luigi Monti, an intimate friend, who for many years was in the habit of dining with the poet on Sunday. The Spanish Jew was Israel Edrehi, who is described as the poet knew him. The theologian was Professor Daniel Treadwell. The poet was T. W. Parsons, a man of real genius, but of very retiring nature. The musician was Ole Bull. The tales are borrowed from various sources, — modern, mediæval, Talmudic, — and many of them possess great merit. "*Paul Revere's Ride*" is written with rare vigor. Among the other more notable tales are "*The Falcon of Sér Federigo*," "*King Robert of Sicily*," "*Torquemada*," "*The Birds of Killingworth*," "*The Bell of Atri*," "*The Legend Beautiful*," and "*Emma and Eginhard*."

Longfellow early conceived the purpose "to build some tower of song with lofty parapet." In 1841 he noted in his

diary: "This evening it has come into my mind to undertake a long and elaborate poem by the holy name of Christ; the theme of which could be the various aspects of Christendom in the Apostolic, Middle, and Modern Ages." Though the task was long delayed, this lofty purpose was never relinquished, and through years of thought it slowly assumed definite shape. After nine years he set to work in earnest to compose "*The Golden Legend*," which was intended to illustrate Christianity in the Middle Ages. It gives a vivid picture of the manners of the thirteenth century. The story running through "*The Golden Legend*" is taken from the minnesinger Hartmann von der Aue. The poem was published in 1851, without any intimation of the larger work of which it forms the central part.

Nearly a score of years passed before another part of the trilogy of "*Christus*" appeared. It was properly entitled "*The New England Tragedies*," and is a sickening record of delusion, intolerance, and cruelty. Unfortunately the imagination had but a small share in the work, which is little more than a skilful metrical version of official records. It was published in 1868 as an independent work, and was received rather coldly. Considered in its relation to the larger work, it must be judged unfortunate. It is depressing in itself; it does not represent the spirit of modern Christianity; and it leaves the trilogy of "*Christus*" incomplete.

"*The Divine Tragedy*," which was published three years later, in 1871, is a close metrical version of the Gospel history. It presents the successive scenes in the life of Christ in a graphic and interesting way. The effort to adhere as closely as possible to the language of the Gospels has prevented a very high degree of metrical excellence. With the publication of "*The Divine Tragedy*," the plan of the poet was revealed. Though "*Christus*" will always be read with gentle interest, especially "*The Golden Legend*," it can hardly rank among his greatest works.

Of his other poems, only a few can be mentioned. "*The*

"Hanging of the Crane" is a pathetic picture of the common course of domestic life. "Morituri Salutamus" is an admirable poem, written for the fiftieth anniversary of the class of 1825 in Bowdoin College. "Keramos" is a second successful effort in the manner of Schiller's "Song of the Bell." "A Book of Sonnets" shows Longfellow to have been a master in that difficult form of verse. The several small volumes of lyrics published in the later years of his life, while adding little to his fame, showed that the poetic fires within his breast were still burning brightly.

Longfellow had now lived beyond the allotted age of man. He had filled out a beautiful, well-rounded life. Both as a man and as a poet he had gained the respect and love of two generations. But at last, with little warning, the end came. On March 15, 1882, he completed his last poem, "The Bells of San Blas," with the words, —

"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere."

A little more than a week later, March 24, he passed away. The funeral service, in keeping with his unassuming character, was simple. Only his family and a few intimate friends — among them Curtis, Emerson, and Holmes — were present; but two continents were mourning his death.

"His gracious presence upon earth
Was as a fire upon a hearth;
As pleasant songs, at morning sung,
The words that dropped from his sweet tongue
Strengthened our hearts, or, heard at night,
Made all our slumbers soft and light."



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

LOWELL was more than a writer. His writings, numerous and excellent as they are, do not fully represent him. He tried to follow his own precept:—

“The epic of a man rehearse;
Be something better than thy verse.”

None of our literary men were great in so many ways. He ranks high as a poet. His critical papers are among the most elaborate and excellent produced in this country. He was a speaker of no mean ability, and a scholar of wide attainments. But overshadowing all these literary accomplishments stands his personality,—a man of strong intellect, wide sympathies, and sterling integrity.

He appeared among the earlier singers of the century. Though influenced for a time, as all young writers are apt to be, by favorite authors, Lowell is strikingly original. In his earlier verse we detect an occasional note from Tennyson or Wordsworth; but his strong intellect soon hewed out a course of its own. His mind was tumultuous with the interests of his day. He rushed to the combat for truth and freedom with abounding zeal. He proclaimed his message in verse distinguished, not for harmony and grace, but for vehemence and force. He was armed with heroic courage:—

“They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.”

He believed in bravely doing his part to right existing wrongs; for—

“God hates your sneakin’ creturs that believe
He’ll settle things they run away and leave.”

Lowell was a New Englander, not only by birth, but by spirit and affection. He was proud of his Puritan ancestry. He loved the landscape of New England and the character of its people. This affection gave him a keen insight into the strength and weakness of New England character, and made him delight in its peculiar dialect:—

“For puttin’ in a downright lick
’Twixt Humbug’s eyes, there’s few can metch it,
And then it helves my thoughts ez slick
Ez stret-grained hickory doos a hetchet.”

Though a broad-minded patriot, he remained throughout life a doughty champion of New England.

The Lowell name has an honored place in the history of Massachusetts. Each generation, since the first settlement of the family at Newbury in 1639, has had its distinguished representative. The city of Lowell is named after Francis Cabot Lowell, who was among the first to perceive that the prosperity of New England was to come from its manufactures. John Lowell was an eminent judge, and introduced into the Constitution the section by which slavery was abolished in Massachusetts. John Lowell, Jr., by a bequest of \$250,000, founded Lowell Institute in Boston. As a family, the Lowells have been distinguished for practical sense, liberal thought, and earnest character.

James Russell Lowell was born in Cambridge, Feb. 22, 1819. His father, as well as his grandfather, was an able and popular minister. The poetic strain in Lowell’s character seems to have been inherited from his mother. She was of Scotch descent, had a talent for languages, and was passionately fond of old ballads. Thus Lowell’s opening mind was nourished on minstrelsy and romance. He early learned to appreciate what is beautiful in nature and in life.

He entered Harvard College in 1835; but no part of his

fame rests on his record as a student. He had an invincible repugnance to mathematics; and he read everything else, it has been said, but his text-books. For irregularity in attending morning prayers, he was suspended for a time; but prayers were then held at sunrise! His genial nature and recognized ability made him a favorite among his fellow-students. When he graduated, in 1838, he was chosen poet of his class. Then followed the study of law. He opened an office in Boston, but his heart was not in his profession. Various poets — Byron, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Tennyson — were more to him than his law-books. In his abundant leisure he wrote a story entitled “My First Client,” but it is doubtful if he ever got that far in a successful legal career.

While waiting for the clients that never came, he found solace in poetry. Love touched his heart, and caused a copious fountain of verse to gush forth. In 1841 he published a little volume with the title “A Year’s Life.” Its motto, borrowed from Schiller, gave the key-note to the poetry: “*Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.*” The verse was inspired by Miss Maria White, a refined, beautiful, and sympathetic woman, whom the poet married three years later, and with whom for nearly a decade he lived in almost ideal union. This volume revealed the presence of poetic gifts of a high order.

The next step in Lowell’s career was to become an editor, — a calling in which he subsequently achieved enviable distinction. In company with Robert Carter, he established the *Pioneer* in 1843. It was a literary journal of high excellence. Among its contributors were Hawthorne, Poe, Whittier, Story, and Parsons, — a galaxy sufficient, one would think, to insure success. But only three numbers appeared. The public of that time was not distinguished for literary culture. The *Pioneer* was in advance of its day; and, after a brief career, it may be said to have died a glorious death.

In 1844 appeared a second volume of poems, in which the hand of a master is apparent. He aims to rise above the empty rhymers, —

“Who lies with idle elbow on the grass,
And fits his singing, like a cunning timer,
To all men’s prides and fancies as they pass.”

He sings of love, truth, patriotism, humanity, religion, courage, hope — great themes which his large soul expands to meet. His verse may be at times exuberant and rhetorical, but it embodies virile power of thought and emotion. The fundamental principles, not only of all his poetry, but of his character, are found in this volume. In “An Incident in a Railroad Car” we see his sense of human worth, regardless of the accidents of fortune: —

“All that hath been majestic
In life or death, since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel heart of man.

And thus, among the untaught poor,
Great deeds and feelings find a home,
That cast in shadow all the golden lore
Of classic Greece and Rome.”

He had unwavering confidence in the indestructible power of truth. In “A Glance Behind the Curtain,” he says: —

“Get but the truth once uttered, and ’tis like
A star new-born, that drops into its place,
And which, once circling in its placid round,
Not all the tumult of the earth can shake.”

A well-known passage in “The Present Crisis” reveals his faith in the watchful care of God: —

“Careless seems the great Avenger; history’s pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness ’twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne, —
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.”

His love of human freedom is revealed in the poem “On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington”: —

“He’s true to God who’s true to man; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, ’neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.”

These are all characteristic themes; and because they came from the poet’s heart, we find in subsequent poems the same truths presented again and again in richly varied language.

With his strong, positive nature, it was natural for Lowell to take part in the slavery agitation of the time. When it cost him unpopularity, he had the courage of his convictions. He acted as he wrote:—

“Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and ’tis prosperous to be just.”

The first series of “The Biglow Papers” belongs to the period of the Mexican War; the second series, to the period of the Civil War. In these poems, written in what he calls the Yankee dialect, Lowell gives free rein to all his resources of argument, satire, and wit. He hits hard blows. A forcible truth is sometimes clothed in homely language:—

“Laborin’ man an’ laborin’ woman
Hev one glory an’ one shame.
Ev’y thin’ that’s done inhuman
Injers all on ’em the same.”

The “pious editor,” who reverences Uncle Sam, “particularly his pockets,” confesses his creed:—

“I du believe in prayer an’ praise
To him that hez the grantin’
O’ jobs,—in every thin’ thet pays,
But most of all in CANTIN’;
This doth my cup with marcies fill,
This lays all thought o’ sin to rest,—
I *don’t* believe in princerple,
But O, I *du* in interest.”

The little poem "What Mr. Robinson Thinks" was a palpable hit, with its refrain: —

"But John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote for Guvener B."

These lines took hold of the public fancy, and were repeated in season and out of season. It is said that Mr. Robinson, who was a worthy man, went abroad to get away from the sound of his own name. But on going to his hotel in Liverpool, the first thing he heard was a childish voice repeating: —

"But John P.
Robinson he."

"The Biglow Papers" deservedly ranks as our best political satire.

In 1848 appeared "The Vision of Sir Launfal," which must always remain his most popular work. It is a treatment of the old legend of the Holy Grail; and, excepting Tennyson's idyl, nothing more worthy of the theme has ever been written. The poem was written at white-heat. It was composed substantially in its present form in forty-eight hours, during which the poet scarcely ate or slept. We find in it a full expression of his poetic powers, — his energetic thought, his deep emotion, his vigorous imagination. In the preludes the poet's love of nature is apparent, as well as the strong moral feeling that formed the substratum of his character. What lines are oftener quoted than these: —

"And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days."

And the following verses contain a vigorous bit of moralizing: —

“For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
 Bubbles we buy with a whole soul’s tasking
 ’Tis heaven alone that is given away,
 ’Tis only God may be had for the asking.”

The same year appeared “A Fable for Critics,” a literary satire without the savagery of Byron’s “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,” or the malignancy of Pope’s “Dunciad.” It is a humorous review of the leading American authors of the day; but beneath the fun there is a sober judgment that rarely erred in its estimates. Along with atrocious rhymes and barbarous puns, there are many felicitous characterizations. He calls Bryant, to whom he was scarcely just, an iceberg:—

“If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,
 Like being stirred up with the very North Pole.”

He hits off Poe as follows:—

“There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
 Three-fifths of him genius, and two-fifths sheer fudge.”

He was quite as severe to himself as to any of his contemporaries; and, as will be seen from the following lines, he was not blind to his own peculiarities:—

“There is Lowell, who’s striving Parnassus to climb—
 With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rime;
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,
 But he can’t with that bundle he has on his shoulders;
 The top of the hill he will ne’er come nigh reaching,
 Till he learns the distinction ’twixt singing and preaching;
 His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
 But he’d rather by half make a drum of the shell,
 And rattle away till he’s old as Methusalem,
 At the head of a march to the last New Jerusalem.”

The poem is loose in construction and unsymmetrical in form, and it is to be regretted that the poet never thought it worth while to bring it into artistic shape. It was first pub-

lished anonymously, but its authorship was soon fixed. Lowell was the only man in America who could have written it.

A larger career was now opening before him. Up to the time of her death, in 1853, his wife, in their beautiful home at Elmwood, had stimulated him to high endeavor. Always fond of reading, and blessed with a capacious memory, he had acquired a wide range of knowledge. In the winter of 1854-55, he delivered before the Lowell Institute a course of twelve lectures on the British poets. Disdaining the arts of the popular orator, he placed his reliance for success, where alone it can permanently rest, on genuine merit. He read his lectures in an earnest, manly way; and their learning, thought, critical insight, and poetic feeling gave to every discourse an indescribable charm.

In 1855, on the resignation of Longfellow, he was appointed professor of modern languages at Harvard, with a leave of absence for two years, to study abroad. He resided chiefly at Dresden, and gave himself to a methodical course of reading in European literature. Like all men of large mould, he had an immense capacity for assimilation. When he returned to America in 1857, and entered upon his duties, he was not unworthy to occupy the chair of his illustrious predecessor. He was an admirable lecturer; and while his ability commanded the respect, his ready kindness won the affection, of the students. Harvard has never had, perhaps, a more popular professor.

The year 1857 witnessed two important events in the life of Lowell. The first was his marriage to Miss Frances Dunlop of Portland, Me., who had superintended the education of his daughter during his absence abroad. The second was the establishment of the *Atlantic*, of which he became editor-in-chief. His contributions were in both prose and poetry, and were, it is needless to say, of a high order. He continued as editor till 1862, when he was succeeded by Mr. Fields. But his editorial career was not yet ended. In 1864 he took charge of the *North American Review*, of which he remained editor till 1873. He was particularly kind to young writers, and lost no opportunity to speak a word of encouragement.

In 1864 he published a volume in prose, entitled "Fireside Travels," containing "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago," "A Moosehead Journal," and "Leaves from My Journal in Italy and Elsewhere." It is a delightful book, full of wit, wisdom, and exuberant fancy. The tide of a full, strong life is reflected in its pages. Here is a characteristic bit of description: "The chief feature of the place was its inns, of which there were five, with vast barns and courtyards, which the railroad was to make as silent and deserted as the palaces of Nimroud. Great white-topped wagons, each drawn by double files of six or eight horses, with its dusty bucket swinging from the hinder axle, and its grim bull-dog trotting silent underneath, or in midsummer panting on the lofty perch beside the driver (how elevated thither baffled conjecture), brought all the wares and products of the country to their mart and seaport in Boston. These filled the inn-yards, or were ranged side by side under broad-roofed sheds; and far into the night the mirth of their lusty drivers clamored from the red-curtained bar-room, while the single lantern, swaying to and fro in the black cavern of the stables, made a Rembrandt of the group of ostlers and horses below."

"Under the Willows," a volume of poems published in 1869, exhibits Lowell's poetic genius at the zenith of its power. It is less luxuriant in manner, and its chaster form adds force to its wisdom and pathos. There is scarcely a poem that is not remarkable for some beauty. Sometimes it is a tender recollection of the past; again it is some weighty truth or telling apologue; or it is a bit of irresistible pathos or prophetic assertion of divine truth. The poems were composed at intervals through many years, according to his usual method: —

"Now, I've a notion, if a poet
Beat up for themes, his verse will show it;
I wait for subjects that hunt me,
By day or night won't let me be,
And hang about me like a curse,
Till they have made me into verse."

In "The First Snow-Fall" there is a fine touch of pathos: —

“Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her;
 And she, kissing back, could not know
 That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
 Folded close under deepening snow.”

The following triplet, from “For an Autograph,” is a noble summons to lofty purpose: —

“Greatly begin! though thou have time
 But for a line, be that sublime, —
 Not failure, but low aim, is crime.”

“Mahmood the Image-Breaker” teaches the incomparable worth of human integrity: —

“Little were a change of station, loss of life or crown,
 But the wreck were past retrieving, if the Man fell down.”

The Commemoration Odes of Lowell are the best of their kind written in this country. Perhaps they have never been surpassed. He seized upon special occasions to pour forth a rich strain of patriotic reflection, eloquent thought, and poetic feeling and imagery. The “Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration,” in memory of the ninety-three graduates who had died in the Civil War, appealed most strongly to the poet’s heart. Among those who had lost their lives were eight relatives of the poet. As he recited the poem, it is said that his face, always expressive, was almost transfigured with the glow of an inward light. Its exalted key is struck in the opening lines: —

“Weak-winged is song,
 Nor aims at that clear-ethered height
 Whither the brave deed climbs for light:
 We seem to do them wrong,
 Bringing our robin’s leaf to deck their hearse
 Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse.”

The “Ode” read at the one hundredth anniversary of the fight at Concord bridge is an eloquent pæan of freedom. It pays a glowing tribute to “the embattled farmers:” —

“They were men
Schooled the soul’s inward gospel to obey,
Though leading to the lion’s den.”

“Under the Old Elm,” read at Cambridge on the hundredth anniversary of Washington’s taking command of the American army, eloquently commemorates the character and achievements of the “Father of his Country :” —

“Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its womb,
Nebulous at first but hardening to a star,
Through mutual share of sunburst and of gloom,
The common faith that made us what we are.”

“The Cathedral” is Lowell’s longest poem. Somewhat uneven in its merits, it contains many noble passages. It might be made to illustrate nearly every prominent point in the poet’s character. As compared with his earlier writings, it reveals the presence of a slightly conservative tendency. The leading incidents of the poem are connected with a visit to the cathedral of Chartres. He was filled with admiration at the consecrated spirit of a former age that sought expression in such a miracle of stone : —

“I gazed abashed,
Child of an age that lectures, not creates,
Plastering our swallow-nests on the awful Past,
And twittering round the work of larger men,
As we had builded what we but deface.”

His deep religious nature is evident throughout the poem, though his creed is larger than that of his Puritan ancestors. Softened by the touch of an all-embracing sympathy and charity, he finds that —

“God is in all that liberates and lifts,
In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles.”

In “The Cathedral” we have a striking instance of the wilful caprice with which his muse sometimes startles us. At

the hotel in Chartres he met two Englishmen who mistook him for a Frenchman.

“My beard translated me to hostile French ;
 So they, desiring guidance in the town,
 Half condescended to my baser sphere,
 And, clubbing in one mess their lack of phrase,
 Set their best man to grapple with the Gaul.
 ‘Esker vous ate a nabitang?’ he asked :
 ‘I never ate one; are they good?’ asked I;
 Whereat they stared, then laughed, and we were friends.”

Considered in the most favorable light, the poet's wit on this occasion can hardly be said to display particular brilliancy; and to introduce the incident into a grave and elevated poem is a bit of freakishness that makes “the judicious grieve.”

Of Lowell's prose writings, there is not space to speak in detail. The three volumes entitled “My Study Windows” and “Among My Books” (two volumes) are made up of essays. “My Study Windows” is of greatest general interest. It opens with three delightful papers entitled “My Garden Acquaintance,” “A Good Word for Winter,” and “On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners.” In these the keen wit, kindly humor, and shrewd observation of Lowell appear at their best. Of his various garden acquaintance, to give a single quotation, he says: “If they will not come near enough to me (as most of them will), I bring them close with an opera-glass, — a much better weapon than a gun. I would not, if I could, convert them from their pretty pagan ways. The only one I sometimes have savage doubts about is the red squirrel. I *think* he oölogizes. I *know* he eats cherries (we counted five of them at one time in a single tree, the stones pattering down like the sparse hail that preludes a storm), and that he gnaws off the small ends of pears to get at the seeds. He steals the corn from under the noses of my poultry. But what would you have? He will come down upon the limb of the tree I

am lying under till he is within a yard of me. He and his mate will scurry up and down the great black walnut for my diversion, chattering like monkeys. Can I sign his death-warrant who has tolerated me about his grounds so long? Not I. Let them steal, and welcome. I am sure I should, had I had the same bringing up and the same temptation. As for the birds, I do not believe there is one of them but does more good than harm; and of how many featherless bipeds can this be said?"

Lowell occupies a foremost place among American critics. For the critic's office he was eminently qualified, both by natural gifts and broad scholarship. The two volumes of "*Among My Books*" are devoted chiefly to elaborate studies of "Dryden," "Shakespeare Once More," "Dante," "Spenser," "Wordsworth," "Milton," and "Keats." In each case a wide range of reading is made to contribute its treasures. The essays, supplied with numerous foot-notes, are learned to a degree that is almost oppressive. Lowell displays a deep insight and great soundness of judgment. His style is rich in allusion. At times it is epigrammatic; and again it is not unlike his own description of Milton's style. "Milton's manner," he says, "is very grand. It is slow, it is stately, moving as in triumphal procession, with music, with historic banners, with spoils from every time and region; and captive epithets, like huge Si-cambrians, thrust their broad shoulders between us and the pomp they decorate." Now and then his humor lights up a sentence or paragraph in the most unexpected way.

As a few other of our literary men, Lowell was appointed to represent this country abroad. His diplomatic career detracts nothing from his reputation. He was appointed minister to Spain in 1877, and three years later minister to England. Without any occasion to display great diplomatic gifts, he filled his post faithfully, and fostered international good feeling. In the social and literary circles of England his culture and genius gained for him a proud distinction.

Lowell was frequently called on for addresses. Among his

works is a volume entitled "Democracy and Other Addresses." He was not an orator so much as a refined and scholarly speaker. He spoke in an earnest, conversational tone, depending upon the weight of his utterance to secure the attention and interest of his hearers. He made no use of gesture. He did not soar to the heights of impassioned utterance, of which we must believe him to have been capable. He did not move a great popular assembly, but to the scholarly and cultivated he was a delightful speaker.

Lowell lived beyond the allotted age of three score and ten. His latter years were sweetened by the tribute of honor and love which a great people united in paying him. He died Aug. 12, 1891, recognized at home and abroad as a man of high gifts and noble character. He is, perhaps, our best representative man of letters. An English critic has fairly expressed the feeling abroad: "No poetic note higher or deeper than his, no aspirations more firmly touched towards lofty issues, no voice more powerful for truth and freedom, have hitherto come to us from across the Atlantic."



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

WHITTIER has been called the Burns of New England ; and that title is not without justification. He owed the first awakening of his poetic talent to the Scottish bard ; and, like him, he has cast a glory over the homely scenes of his native region. In the choice of his themes he is less a national than a sectional poet. Less cosmopolitan than Longfellow and Lowell, he is pre-eminently the poet of New England. It is the spirit, the legend, and the landscape of New England that are reflected in his verse.

John Greenleaf Whittier sprang from Quaker ancestry, and the memory of the wrongs inflicted upon his sect at an earlier day never left him. He was born near the town of Haverhill, Mass., Dec. 17, 1807. The house was an old one, surrounded by fields and woods ; and in front of it, to use the poet's words, a brook "foamed, rippled, and laughed." The Merrimac River was not far away. He helped to till an unfriendly soil, and in his leisure hours he wandered over the hills or loitered along the streams.

Like Franklin, Whittier was a self-made man. His early education was limited to brief terms in the district school. He was fond of reading, but his father's library contained only a score of tedious volumes. For a number of years the Bible was his principal resource for history, poetry, and eloquence ; and encouraged and aided by his mother, he made its literary and religious treasures a permanent possession.

In spite of the meagre advantages of his frugal home, as compared with our present opulence of books and papers, he had the wealth of exuberant life and observant eyes. Nature became his inspiring teacher. In "The Barefoot Boy," with its childhood memories, he says:—

“I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night.”

The monotony of the hospitable farmhouse was relieved now and then by the visits of peddlers. Strolling people were looked on more indulgently then than now. When Whittier was fourteen years old his first schoolmaster brought to the Quaker home a volume of Burns, from which he read, to the boy's great delight. It kindled the poetic fire within. “I begged him to leave the book with me,” the poet said years afterwards, “and set myself at once to the task of mastering the glossary of the Scottish dialect at its close. This was about the first poetry I had ever read (with the exception of that of the Bible, of which I had been a close student), and it had a lasting influence upon me. I began to make rhymes myself, and to imagine stories and adventures.”

In 1826 Whittier made the acquaintance of William Lloyd Garrison, who exerted no small influence upon his subsequent career. Garrison had established the *Free Press* at Newburyport. A poem contributed by young Whittier so impressed him with its indications of genius that he visited the Quaker lad in his home, and warmly urged a cultivation of his talents. The visit was not fruitless. The gifted youth resolved to obtain a better education; and to acquire the necessary means, which his father was not able to supply, he learned the art of shoemaking. In 1827 he entered the Academy in Haverhill, and by his genial nature and his literary ability quickly attained a position of distinction.

After two terms at the Academy and a brief interval of teaching, he served an apprenticeship to the literary craft by editing or contributing to several newspapers. His writings,

both in prose and in poetry, attracted attention. Without the breadth of culture enjoyed by some contemporary writers who afterward became famous, he came to be regarded as a young man of great promise. "The culmination of that man's fame," the *New England Review* declared in 1829, "will be a proud period in the history of our literature."

A wider field soon opened before him. In 1830 George D. Prentice gave up the editorial management of the *New England Weekly Review* of Hartford, and Whittier was called to succeed him. For a year and a half he edited the paper with ability and success. He avoided the coarse personalities which at that time disgraced American journalism. He was a strong advocate of temperance, freedom, and religion. A resolute heart beat under his quiet manner and sober Quaker dress. He published in the *Review* no fewer than forty-two poems, most of which he afterwards suppressed. But among those retained in his collected works are "The Frost Spirit," "The Cities of the Plain," and "The Vaudois Teacher." In 1832, on account of ill-health, Whittier severed his connection with the *Review*.

He took an earnest and active part in the anti-slavery movement. He surrendered his literary ambition to what he believed the call of duty. He displayed the self-sacrificing heroism of a sincere reformer. In his own words:—

"From youthful hopes,—from each green spot
Of young Romance and gentle Thought,
Where storm and tumult enter not,—

From each fair altar, where belong
The offerings Love requires of Song
In homage to her bright-eyed throng,—

With soul and strength, with heart and hand,
I turned to Freedom's struggling band,—
To the sad Helots of our land."

In 1833 he published a strong pamphlet against slavery, entitled "Justice and Expediency; or, Slavery considered with

a view to its Rightful and Effectual Remedy, Abolition." It was printed and circulated at his own expense, costing him a considerable part of his year's earnings.

In his anti-slavery agitation he more than once encountered mob violence in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In 1837 he went to Philadelphia to write for the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, of which he became editor a few months later. It was issued from Pennsylvania Hall, a large building erected by the anti-slavery people of the city. The building was subsequently sacked and burned by a mob. But in spite of his loss, Whittier continued to issue his paper regularly, until he was forced to give up the enterprise by failing health. It was out of his own experience that he wrote in "The Preacher":—

"Never in custom's oiled grooves
The world to a higher level moves,
But grates and grinds with friction hard
On granite boulder and flinty shard."

Unlike his friend Garrison, Whittier favored political action. He wished to re-enforce moral suasion with the ballot. He stoutly supported the several political organizations known successively as the Liberty party, Free-Soil party, and Republican party, which were opposed to slavery. During all these years of agitation, he took advantage of every occasion to send forth impassioned anti-slavery verse. In 1849 these poems were collected into a volume entitled "Voices of Freedom." Their vehemence, as in "Stanzas," "Clerical Oppressors," "The Pastoral Letter," and "The Branded Hand," almost reaches fierceness. Though Longfellow and Lowell wrote notable anti-slavery poems, Whittier may justly be considered the laureate of the abolition movement.

While engaged in the anti-slavery movement, Whittier did not wholly give up his purely literary work. The family residence had been changed to Amesbury, and he depended on his pen for support. He was a valued contributor to several periodicals, among which were the *New England Magazine* and

the *Democratic Review*. In these some of his best work appeared. "Mogg Megone" and "The Bridal of Pennacook" are Indian tales, chiefly noteworthy for their vivid description of New England scenery. Of the former Whittier did not have a high opinion, and sarcastically described it as "a big Injun strutting about in Walter Scott's plaid," which is not far from the truth. "Cassandra Southwick" is a justly admired ballad founded on the persecution of the Quakers in Massachusetts.

Whittier was intensely democratic in his feelings. He did not believe in the divine right of any class to lord it over their fellow-men. Through all the disguises of toil, poverty, and sin, he recognized the innate worth and natural rights of man. In the poem "Democracy" he says:—

"By misery unrepelled, unawed
By pomp or power, thou seest a MAN
In prince or peasant, — slave or lord, —
Pale priest, or swarthy artisan.

Through all disguise, form, place, or name,
Beneath the flaunting robes of sin,
Through poverty and squalid shame,
Thou lookest on *the man* within.

On man, as man, retaining yet,
Howe'er debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set, —
The immortal gift of God to him."

In harmony with this broad human sympathy, he wrote a series of poems, unsurpassed of their kind, to which he gave the name of "Songs of Labor." They are intended to show, —

"The unsung beauty hid life's common things below."

In these songs the labors of "The Shipbuilders," "The Shoemakers," "The Drovers," "The Fishermen," "The Huskers," and "The Lumbermen," pass before us in idealized form.

Whittier was never married. But little of his poetry is in-

spired by love, the master motive of song. Yet there are indications, unmistakable and tender, that his life was not without its romance. The little poem "In School Days" is too natural and too charming to have been fiction:—

"He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing:

'I'm sorry that I spelt the word;
I hate to go above you,
Because" — the brown eyes lower fell, —
'Because, you see, I love you.'"

And in "Memories" we have a fond picture of a later day:—

"I hear again thy low replies,
I feel thine arm within my own,
And timidly again uprise
The fringed lids of hazel eyes,
With soft brown tresses overflown.
Ah, memories of sweet summer eves,
Of moonlit wave and willowy way,
Of stars and flowers, and dewy leaves,
And smiles and tones more dear than they."

Whittier does not belong to the bards of doubt. Like most of the strong singers of the present century, he recognized the divine presence as existent and operative in all things. His verse is filled with the cheer of hope and courage. In "The Reformer" he says:—

"But life shall on and upward go;
Th' eternal step of Progress beats
To that great anthem, calm and slow,
Which God repeats.

Take heart! — the Waster builds again, —
A charmed life old Goodness hath;
The tares may perish, — but the grain
Is not for death.

God works in all things; all obey
 His first propulsion from the night:
 Wake thou and watch!—the world is gray
 With morning light."

It was this faith that sustained him in the midst of detraction, violence, and loss. In "Barclay of Ury," he exclaims:—

"Happy he whose inward ear
 Angel comfortings can hear
 O'er the rabble's laughter;
 And while Hatred's fagots burn,
 Glimpses through the smoke discern
 Of the good hereafter."

For a dozen years Whittier was a regular contributor to the *National Era*, an organ of the anti-slavery party established in 1847. In this paper appeared some of his most characteristic work, both in poetry and prose. His muse had gained in breadth of thought and sentiment. It was at this time he wrote:—

"I love the old melodious lays
 Which softly melt the ages through,
 The songs of Spenser's golden days,
 Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
 Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew."

Among the eighty poems contributed to the *National Era*, some of those needing special mention are "Tauler," "Burns," "Kathleen," "Stanzas for the Times," "Trust," "A Sabbath Scene," "Calef in Boston," "The Last Walk in Autumn," "Ichabod," and "Maud Muller." They reach the higher levels of song, and give gemlike expression to some noble thought or sentiment. "Ichabod," meaning, as Bible readers will remember, "the glory hath departed," is a dirge over Webster for the compromising spirit shown by him in a speech in 1850. It is full of suppressed power.

"The Last Walk in Autumn" is a beautiful study of New England landscape. It abounds in noble thought, and contains

life-like portraits of Emerson, Bayard Taylor, and Sumner. At times, as the poet tells us, he longs for gentler skies and softer air ; but after all he prefers the vigor of a colder clime : —

“ Better to stem with heart and hand
The roaring tide of life, than lie,
Unmindful, on its flowery strand,
Of God’s occasions drifting by !
Better with naked nerve to bear
The needles of this goading air,
Than, in the lap of sensual ease, forego
The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to know.”

Among the prose contributions to the *National Era* was a series of biographical studies, “ Bunyan,” “ Andrew Marvell,” “ Richard Baxter,” and others, entitled “ Old Portraits,” and “ Margaret Smith’s Journal in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, 1678–9.” The latter is a kind of historical novel, written in the antique style belonging to the period it describes. It introduces the leading characters and incidents of the time, and reproduces the old colonial life in a very realistic way.

In 1860 appeared a volume of “ Home Ballads, Poems, and Lyrics,” which contains a number of notable pieces. “ Skipper Ireson’s Ride,” with its refrain and pathetic conclusion, is well known : —

“ So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead.”

In “ The Shadow and the Light ” the poet seeks an answer to the immemorial problem of evil : —

“ O, why and whither ? — God knows all ;
I only know that he is good,
And that whatever may befall
Or here or there, must be the best that could.

For he is merciful as just ;
And so, by faith correcting sight,
I bow before his will, and trust
Howe'er they seem he doeth all things right."

In "Times," written for an agricultural and horticultural exhibition, the beauty and blessedness of labor are finely presented : —

"Give fools their gold, and knaves their power;
Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall;
Who sows a field, or trains a flower,
Or plants a tree, is more than all.

For he who blesses most is blest ;
And God and man shall own his worth
Who toils to leave as his bequest
An added beauty to the earth."

The Civil War was repugnant to Whittier's Quaker principles. He looked on war as murder ; and his preference was to let the South secede, and work out her destiny as a slaveholding country. But he was not an indifferent spectator when once the issue was joined. The collection of songs, "In War Time," is pervaded by a sad yet trustful spirit : —

"The future's gain
Is certain as God's truth ; but, meanwhile, pain
Is bitter, and tears are salt ; our voices take
A sober tone ; our very household songs
Are heavy with a nation's griefs and wrongs ;
And innocent mirth is chastened for the sake
Of the brave hearts that nevermore shall beat,
The eyes that smile no more, the unreturning feet."

He rejoiced at the freedom that at last came to the negro : —

"Not as we hoped ; — but what are we ?
Above our broken dreams and plans
God lays, with wiser hand than man's,
The corner-stones of liberty."

The best known of his war poems is "Barbara Frietchie," which vividly describes an incident that never happened. After the termination of the war, Whittier favored a magnanimous policy toward the South, and desired that there might be "no unnecessary hangings to gratify an evil desire of revenge."

"Snow-Bound," a winter idyl, is an exquisite description of country life in New England two generations ago. It portrays the early home of the poet, showing us its modest interior, and giving us portraits of its various inmates. After the boding storm had buried every object beneath the snow:—

"A prompt, decisive man, no breath
Our father wasted; 'Boys, a path!'"

At night the spacious fireplace was heaped with wood;

"Then, hovering near,
We watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom."

Whittier's mother was a woman of good sense, native refinement, and benign face. Here is her portrait:—

"Our mother, while she turned her wheel,
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,
Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Cocheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways),
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home."

Another inmate is thus sketched:—

“Our uncle, innocent of books,
Was rich in lore of fields and brooks.

.

In moons and tides and weather wise,
He read the clouds as prophecies,
And foul or fair could well divine,
By many an occult hint and sign,
Holding the cunning-warded keys
To all the woodcraft mysteries.”

The maiden aunt is tenderly drawn : —

“The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love’s unselfishness.”

Of his sister Mary the poet says : —

“There, too, our elder sister plied
Her evening task the stand beside;
A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice.”

Of his sister Elizabeth, a noble woman of poetic gifts, he thus speaks : —

“As one who held herself a part
Of all she saw, and let her heart
Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes.”

Of other portraits and scenes in this admirable poem, which deserves to rank with “The Deserted Village” and “The Cotter’s Saturday Night,” there is not space to speak.

"The Tent on the Beach," published in 1867, somewhat resembles Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn," or Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," in its structure. The poet and his two friends, Bayard Taylor and James T. Fields, encamping on the seashore, enliven their sojourn with tales of the olden time. The portraits of the party are skilfully drawn; but most interesting of all is the poet's sketch of himself:—

"And one there was, a dreamer born,
Who, with a mission to fulfil,
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn
The crank of an opinion mill,
Making his rustic reed of song
A weapon in the war with wrong,
Yoking his fancy to the breaking-plough
That beam-deep turned the soil for truth to spring and grow."

Of the nine stories related in "The Tent on the Beach," all but two refer to New England themes.

Though troubled with increasing infirmity, especially with deafness, Whittier wore old age gracefully. He continued to write to the last. Many of his later poems are pervaded by a deep religious spirit. Several of them possess an autobiographic interest, as expressly setting forth the poet's views of God and immortality. A profound faith took away his dread of death; and in "The Eternal Goodness" he says:—

"And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

A similar trust finds expression in "My Birthday." It is repeated in the pathetic lines "What the Traveler Said at Sunset":—

“The shadows grow and deepen round me,
I feel the dew-fall in the air;
The muezzin of the darkening thicket
I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

.

I go to find my lost and mourned for
Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,
And all that hope and faith foreshadow
Made perfect in Thy holy will.”

The leading characteristics of Whittier's poetry may be recognized in what has already been presented. We miss, for the most part, a classic finish of style. His verse is vital rather than statuesque. Sometimes we meet with false accents and faulty rhymes. He does not treat of the great questions started by modern research, nor undertake to solve existing social problems. From the start he takes his stand in the region of faith, which finds a solution of all problems in the love of God. He loved nature; and while his observation was confined chiefly to a part of New England, he has given us landscape pictures of almost matchless beauty.

One of the charms of his verse comes from its sincerity. He was no mere artist in verse, seeking themes with prosaic calculation, and then polishing them into a cold, artificial lustre. With him poetry was not so much an end as a means. He used it as his principal weapon in his battle against wrong. He made it the medium of passionate truth. His verse has a vitality that brings it home to the hearts of men, inspiring them with new strength, courage, and hope.

Modest to a marked degree, Whittier did not fully appreciate the grandeur of his life nor the worth of his verse. He had the true dignity of a noble nature. While scorning notoriety, he valued genuine sympathy. The loving spirit of his verse was exemplified in his daily life. He was sympathetic and helpful. His friendships were constant and beautiful. In social life he had a kindly humor that rarely found a place in his earnest verse. His genius was not eccentric. He was

a man of conviction, of purpose, of courage. He preferred a life of earnest struggle to a life of ignoble ease, — a sentiment to which he gave expression in the beautiful autobiographic poem “My Birthday” : —

“Better than self-indulgent years
The outflung heart of youth,
Than pleasant songs in idle years
The tumult of the truth.”

His last years, as was fitting, were serene. After many stormy years, he had at last won an honored place in the literature of our country, and, what is better, in the hearts of our people. The wisest and best delighted to do him honor. His home at Danvers, Mass., became a place of pilgrimage. After reaching a ripe old age, he passed away Sept. 7, 1892. In the slightly altered words of Longfellow, addressed to the “Hermit of Amesbury” on his seventieth birthday : —

“Thou too hast heard
Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,
And spoken only when thy soul was stirred.”



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

HOLMES was the latest survivor of the remarkable group of writers who may be said to have created American literature. He was not the greatest of the group; but there is scarcely any other whose works are more widely read. Under the present stress of life in America, there are very many persons who would rather be amused than instructed. When an author succeeds in both amusing and instructing, he has a double claim upon the grateful affection of the public. This twofold end Holmes achieved more fully than any of his contemporaries.

He stood aloof, in a remarkable degree, from the great movements in which the other New England writers of his day were more or less engaged. He had but little sympathy with transcendentalism. Instead of depending upon an "inner light," he placed his reliance, with true Baconian spirit, in observation, evidence, investigation. When, as rarely happened, he attempted to be profound in his speculations, he was not notably successful. Conservative in temperament, he did not aspire to the *rôle* of a social reformer. His indifference to the abolition movement brought upon him the censure of some of its leaders. Unswayed by external influences, he steadfastly adhered to the path he had marked out for himself.

He was one of the most brilliant and versatile of men. Though far more earnest than is commonly supposed, he was not dominated, as was Emerson, by a profound philosophy. His poetry has not the power that springs from a great moral purpose. He did not concentrate all his energies upon a single department of literature or science. He was a physician,

lecturer, poet, essayist, novelist; and such were his brilliant gifts that he attained eminence in them all.

Right or wrong, most persons distrust the judgment and earnestness of a man of wit. Accustomed to laugh at his play of fancy, they feel more or less injured when he talks in a serious strain. They seek his society for entertainment rather than for counsel. Holmes well understood this popular prejudice; but he was far too faithful to his genius to affect a solemnity he did not feel. In his delightful poem "*Nux Post-cœnatica*," he excuses himself from a public dinner:—

"Besides—my prospects—don't you know that people won't employ
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy?
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root?"

Holmes was a firm believer in heredity. No small part of his writings is devoted to a discussion or illustration of inherited tendencies. Yet he did not take a special interest in his own ancestry, though they were of the best New England stock. He had, to use his own words, "a right to be grateful for a probable inheritance of good instincts, a good name, and a bringing up in a library where he bumped about among books from the time when he was hardly taller than one of his father's or grandfather's folios." He was born in Cambridge, Aug. 29, 1809; another *annus mirabilis*, it has been called, as the birth-year also of Lincoln, Darwin, Tennyson, and Gladstone. His father, the Rev. Abiel Holmes, was a Congregational minister of scholarly tastes and attainments. His "*Annals of America*" is a careful and useful history. Holmes's mother is described as a bright, vivacious woman, of small figure, social tastes, and sprightly manners—characteristics that reappeared in the son.

In his "*Autobiographical Notes*," only too brief and fragmentary, Holmes has given us glimpses of his childhood. He was a precocious child, thoughtful beyond his years. He made a good record at school, and was fond of reading. Among his

favorite books was Pope's "Homer," which never lost its charm for him. His reading was fragmentary. "I have always read *in* books," he says, "rather than *through* them, and always with more profit from the books I read *in* than the books I read *through*; for when I set out to read *through* a book I always felt that I had a task before me; but when I read *in* a book it was the page or the paragraph that I wanted, and which left its impression, and became a part of my intellectual furniture."

After a preparatory course at Andover, Holmes entered Harvard College in 1825, graduating four years later in what became "the famous class of '29." There are scant records of his college days. Whatever may have been his devotion to study, it is certain that he was not indifferent to convivial pleasures. His talent for rhyming led to his appointment as class poet. The class feeling was stronger in those days than it is now; and, after a time, the "class of '29" held annual dinners in Boston. No one entered into these reunions with greater zest than Holmes. Beginning with the year 1851, he furnished for twenty-six consecutive years one or more poems for each reunion. The best known of these class poems is "Bill and Joe," which contains, in the poet's happiest manner, mingled humor and pathos:

"Come, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe."

After graduation, Holmes began the study of law, and attended lectures for a year. But he found that he was on the wrong track, and gave it up for medicine. He attended two courses of lectures in Boston, and then went abroad to complete his course. He took time to do some sight-seeing, and visited England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. But he spent most of his two years abroad in Paris, where he gave himself diligently to professional study. He had exalted

ideas of his profession — a little better than he carried out. “Medicine,” he said, “is the most difficult of sciences and the most laborious of arts. It will task all your powers of body and mind, if you are faithful to it. Do not dabble in the muddy sewers of politics, nor linger by the enchanted streams of literature, nor dig in far-off fields for the hidden waters of alien sciences. The great practitioners are generally those who concentrate all their powers on their business.”

There is an incident in his life while yet a law-student that must not be passed over. He had been writing for *The Collegian* a good many verses that were well received. Indeed, to borrow his phrase, he had become infected with the “lead-poisoning of type-metal.” One day he read that the Navy Department had issued orders for the breaking up of the old frigate *Constitution*, then lying at Charlestown. His soul was deeply stirred; and, seizing a scrap of paper, he dashed off the passionate lines of “Old Ironsides:” —

“Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rang the battle shout,
And burst the cannon’s roar; —
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more!”

The stirring words of the poem, copied in the press throughout the country, found a response in the heart of the people. Under the sudden blaze of indignation, the astonished Secretary revoked his order, and the gallant vessel was spared for half a century. This result was a remarkable achievement for a young man who had just attained his majority.

In 1836 Holmes opened an office in Boston as a practising physician. He was sympathetic, painstaking, and conscientious; and in a reasonable time he gained a fair practice. In spite of his fondness for literature, he continued his professional studies with unusual diligence and success. He won

several prizes by medical essays. But his scholarly tastes fitted him better for a medical lecturer than for a practitioner; and in 1838 he was much gratified to be elected Professor of Anatomy at Dartmouth College, — a position that required his presence there only three months of the session.

The year he opened his office in Boston, he published his first volume of verse. From a professional standpoint it was, perhaps, an unwise thing to do. People are instinctively averse to going to poets for prescriptions. But he was far from indifferent to his reputation as a poet. As between the two, he would probably have chosen to go down to posterity famed for his gifts in poetry rather than for his skill in medicine. The slender volume contained several pieces that have since remained general favorites. His poetic powers matured early; and, among all the productions of his subsequent years, there is nothing better than “The Last Leaf” — that inimitable combination of humor and pathos. One of its stanzas is a perfect gem: —

“The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.”

His jolly humor nowhere else finds better expression than in “My Aunt,” “The September Gale,” and “The Height of the Ridiculous.”

In 1840, the year his connection with Dartmouth College ceased, Holmes thought himself well enough established to end his bachelorhood. His tastes were strongly domestic. Accordingly, he married Miss Amelia Lee Jackson, a gentle, affectionate, considerate woman, who appreciated her husband's talents, and, with a noble devotion, helped him to make the most of them. For nearly fifty years her delicate tact shielded him from annoyances, and her skilful management relieved him of domestic cares.

In 1847 Holmes was elected Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in Harvard University. The chair was afterwards divided, and he had charge of anatomy. He held this position for the long period of thirty-five years. He recognized the danger of falling into an unprogressive routine. "I have noticed," he wrote to a friend, "that the wood of which academic *fauteuils* are made has a narcotic quality, which occasionally renders their occupants somnolent, lethargic, or even comatose." But he escaped this danger; and, taking a deep interest in his department, he remained a wide-awake, progressive teacher to the end. His lectures were illumined with a coruscating humor that made them peculiarly interesting.

About the middle of the century the popular lecture was in great vogue in New England. Men of distinguished ability did not disdain this means of disseminating wisdom and replenishing their pockets. Like Emerson, Holmes made lecturing tours. Though not imposing in person nor gifted in voice, he was much sought after for his unfailing vivacity and wit. In the "Autocrat" he makes a humorous reference to his experience as a lecturer. "Family men," he says, "get dreadfully homesick. In the remote and bleak village the heart returns to the red blaze of the logs in one's fireplace at home.

'There are his young barbarians all at play.'

No, the world has a million roosts for a man, but only one nest."

The founding of *The Atlantic Monthly*, the name of which he suggested, was an important event in the life of Holmes. He was engaged to write for it; and the result was "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," perhaps the best of all his works. He here revealed himself as a charming writer of prose. The "Autocrat" talks delightfully on a hundred different subjects, presenting with a careless grace and irrepressible humor the accumulated wisdom of years of observation and study. Nothing is too small or too great for his reflections. "There are

few books," as George William Curtis well said, "that leave more distinctly the impression of a mind teeming with riches of many kinds. It is, in the Yankee phrase, thoroughly wide awake. There is no languor, and it permits none in the reader, who must move along the page warily, lest in the gay profusion of the grove, unwittingly defrauding himself of delight, he miss some flower half-hidden, some gem chance-dropped, some darting bird."

Interspersed through the brilliant talk of the "Autocrat" are nearly a score of poems, partly humorous and partly serious. Several of these rank among the poet's choicest productions. A special charm is given to each poem by its setting. "The Chambered Nautilus" was Holmes's favorite among all his poems. "Booked for immortality" was Whittier's criticism the moment he read it. The last stanza gives beautiful expression to the aspiration of a noble spirit:—

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

The humorous poem "Contentment" embodied, as he tells us, "the subdued and limited desires of his maturity:"—

"Little I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone,
(A *very plain* brown stone will do,)—
That I may call my own;—
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun."

Other poems from the "Autocrat" deserving special mention are "Musa," "What We All Think," "Latter-Day Warnings," "Æstivation," and, above all these, "The Deacon's Masterpiece."

About the time the *Atlantic* was founded, the Saturday Club came into existence, and numbered among its members Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Motley, Agassiz, and other distinguished literary men of Boston and Cambridge. They dined together the last Saturday of every month. A more brilliant club had not existed since the days of Johnson and Goldsmith. Holmes took great pride in it, and added greatly to its festive meetings. He was a prince of talkers. His wise, witty, genial, vivacious talk is said to have been even better than his books. He called talking "one of the fine arts." He probably had the Saturday Club in mind when, in the "Autocrat," he defined an intellectual banquet as "that carnival-shower of questions and replies and comments, large axioms bowled over the mahogany like bombshells from professional mortars, and explosive wit dropping its trains of many-colored fire, and the mischief-making rain of *bon-bons* pelting everybody that shows himself."

Holmes was strongly attached to Boston, and was really its poet laureate. He playfully said that the "Boston State House is the hub of the solar system," and in his heart half believed it. He received a proud and affectionate recognition from the city. He was expected to grace every great festive occasion with his presence, and to contribute a poem to its enjoyment. The number of these occasional pieces is surprising; they form no inconsiderable part of his poetical works. Of their kind they are unsurpassed. Year after year Holmes met the demand upon him with unfailing freshness and vigor. But it goes without saying that *vers de société* does not belong to the highest order of poetry. It does not sound the deeper notes of song, nor entitle the poet, no matter how brilliant may be his verse, to rank with those "to whom poetry, for its own sake, has been a passion and belief."

Holmes was strongly drawn to theological subjects. It may be true, as has been suggested, that he inherited "ecclesiastical pugnacity;" but it was not exercised in defending the ecclesiastical beliefs and institutions of his ancestors. A theo-

logical thread runs through nearly all his prose writings; and his uniform antipathy to what he believed to be erroneous creeds does more than anything else to give them unity. Yet at heart he was a religious man. His anchor was "trust in God." He held to the doctrine of immortality. He looked upon this world as a training-school. In his "Autobiographical Notes," written in his old age, he says, "This colony of the universe is an educational institution so far as the human race is concerned. On this theory I base my hopes for myself and my fellow-creatures. If, in the face of all the so-called evil to which I cannot close my eyes, I have managed to retain a cheerful optimism, it is because this educational theory is at the basis of my working creed."

"The Professor at the Breakfast Table," published in 1859, is devoted chiefly to a discussion of theological subjects. Whatever may be thought of the "Professor's" views, there can be no question about the confidence and the skill with which they are presented. The *dramatis personæ*, if one may use the phrase, are interesting; and the death-scene of the Little Gentleman is the most pathetic incident in all Holmes's writings. Judged from an artistic standpoint, the "Professor" is somewhat below the "Autocrat." It is less spontaneous, being written largely, one might think, to relieve the author's mind of a theological burden. Or, to borrow his own words, "The first juice that runs of itself from the grapes comes from the heart of the fruit, and tastes of the pulp only; when the grapes are squeezed in the press, the flow betrays the flavor of the skin."

The third and last of the Breakfast Table series was "The Poet at the Breakfast Table," which appeared in 1873. It is hazardous to attempt to repeat successes; but the result justified what Holmes called his audacity. The "Poet" is a little more serious than his predecessors; but while he is perceptibly inferior to them in novelty and vivacity, he is still delightful. The volume contains in successive cantos "Wind-Clouds and Star-Drifts," Holmes's longest and most ambitious poem.

"This poem," he says, "holds a good deal of self-communing, and gave me the opportunity of expressing some thoughts and feelings not to be found elsewhere in my writings." Shall we accept the creeds of "sad-eyed hermits" and "angry conclaves"?

"Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
The Father's voice that speaks itself divine!
Love must be still our Master; till we learn
What he can teach us of a woman's heart,
We know not His, whose love embraces all."

Holmes's two principal novels, "Elsie Venner" which appeared in 1861, and "The Guardian Angel" which appeared in 1867, belong to the class of fiction with a purpose. The first was designed to illustrate the effects of a powerful pre-natal influence; the other, the law of heredity. They have been spoken of, much to the author's chagrin, as "medicated novels." The scenes are laid in New England, the manners of which are portrayed with graphic realism. These novels have been criticised as crude in form; but, in spite of defects of plot, they have been widely read. They will, no doubt, be less read as interest in their main theme declines; but "The Guardian Angel," the better of the two books, will long be deservedly popular for its humor and wisdom.

Holmes did not have much confidence in the biographer's art. "I should like to see," he says in "The Poet at the Breakfast Table," "any man's biography with corrections and emendations by his ghost." But, in spite of this distrust, he wrote two popular biographies, one of Motley, the other of Emerson. Motley was one of his most intimate friends; and it was not unnatural, therefore, that the biography, which was published in 1878, should bear somewhat the character of a tribute. His temperament hardly qualified him for writing the life of Emerson. He was not inclined toward transcendentalism; and, as he acknowledged, he was "a late comer as an admirer of the Concord poet and philosopher." But, as in all his writings, he gave himself conscientiously to the task. A keen analytical

spirit took the place of a profound sympathy. The biography, which appeared in 1884, is more satisfactory to the general public than to the students of Emerson. It is interesting, and at times brilliant; but somehow one feels the absence of a perfectly sympathetic treatment.

In 1882, after an incumbency of thirty-five years, he resigned his professorship. Four years later he made a visit abroad, spending nearly all his time in England. He was warmly received in London society. "He is enjoying himself immensely," wrote Lowell, "and takes as keen an interest in everything as he would have done at twenty. I almost envy him this freshness of genius. Everybody is charmed with him, as it is natural they should be." He was honored by the universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge, and Oxford with degrees. The observations of his brief stay abroad he embodied in "Our Hundred Days in Europe."

Though now considerably beyond the allotted limit of human life, Holmes did not give up his literary work. In addition to the biography of Emerson, he wrote a third novel, "A Mortal Antipathy," which fell considerably below his previous efforts in that line. "Over the Teacups," a work after the manner of the Breakfast Table series, was written when he had passed his eightieth year. It possesses a pathetic interest. The exuberant wit and brilliancy of his earlier works are largely replaced by the reminiscent soberness of age. "Tea-cups," he said, "are not coffee-cups. They do not hold so much. Their pallid infusion is but a feeble stimulant compared with the black decoction served at the morning board." Yet it was a pleasure for him to write; it gave him occupation in the loneliness of age, and kept him in relation with his fellow-beings. The successive papers were kindly received, a fact that gave him great satisfaction. "Over the Teacups" contains "The Broomstick Train," a poem in which the old-time fancy and lightness are again apparent. It is not unworthy to be placed by the side of "How the Old Horse won the Bet," "Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle," and other of his best pieces.

But the end was now near, not unheralded by gently failing faculties. His last days were made as happy as possible by the affectionate remembrance and tender consideration of a large circle of friends. He was spared the trial of protracted illness. He was able to take his usual walks up to a few days before his death. He passed away painlessly in his chair, Oct. 7, 1894. Numberless loving tributes were paid to his memory on both sides of the Atlantic.

Holmes was an interesting and lovable man, genial, brilliant, witty, and yet deeply earnest withal. His personality is reflected in his books in a rare degree. Whatever the presiding genius at the Breakfast Table may be called, — Autocrat, Professor, Poet, — we know that it is Holmes himself that is speaking.

“For though he changes dress and name,
The man beneath is still the same,
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,
One actor in a dozen parts,
And whatsoe’er the mask may be,
The voice assures us, *This is he.*”

He might be called the most human of our men of letters. He delighted in touching life at many points. He had the gift of mechanical ingenuity, and always liked to have something to tinker at. He invented the stereoscope, out of which, had he sought to do so, he might have made a fortune. He was fond of boating; and the description he gives of his fleet in the “Autocrat” was not all fiction. He was fond of a good horse; as he said, —

“An easy gait — two, forty-five —
Suits me; I do not care; —
Perhaps for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.”

He felt a broad sympathy with his fellow-men; and, as he felt kindly towards them, he took it for granted that they would be interested in what he wrote. “I do not know,” he said, “what special gifts have been granted or denied me; but

this I know, that I am like so many others of my fellow-creatures, that when I smile, I feel as if they must ; when I cry, I think their eyes fill ; and it always seems to me that when I am most truly myself, I come nearest to them, and am surest being listened to by the brothers and sisters of the larger family into which I was born so long ago." This broad and tender sympathy will long give him an uncommon hold on the hearts of men.

SECOND NATIONAL PERIOD.

PROMINENT WRITERS.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (born 1837). Began as a writer of verse. For a number of years editor of *Atlantic Monthly*. "The Undiscovered Country," "A Fearful Responsibility," "A Modern Instance," and "A Woman's Reason" are among his best works, to which may be added a series of farce dramas, including "The Mouse Trap," "The Parlor Car," "The Register," etc.

HENRY JAMES (born 1843). Critic and novelist. Originated the class of fiction known as "international" or "transatlantic," and a leader of the realistic school of novelists. Author of "Daisy Miller," "The Portrait of a Lady," "The American," "French Poets and Novelists," etc.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (born 1833). Poet and critic. Author of "The Doorstep," "Alice of Monmouth," "The Victorian Poets," "Poets of America," etc.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD (born 1825). Poet and critic. Author of "The Late English Poets," "Loves and Heroines of the Poets," "The Dead Master," "Hymns to the Sea," etc.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (born 1836). A writer of interesting stories and lyric verse. Author of "Babie Bell," "The Face Against the Pane," and many society poems; also "The Story of a Bad Boy," "Marjorie Daw and Other People," "Prudence Palfrey," "Stillwater Tragedy," etc.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER (born 1844). Editor of the *Century*, and writer of polished verse. First volume of poetry, "The New Day," appeared in 1875, followed by "The Celestial Passion," and "Lyrics."

FRANCIS BRET HARTE (born 1838). Editor, poet, and story-teller of the Rocky Mountains. "The Heathen Chinnee" acquired for its author immediate fame. Among his numerous works may be mentioned

"The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Wiggles," "The Story of a Mine," "Maruja, a Novel," etc.

J. T. TROWBRIDGE (born 1827). A popular novelist and poet. Author of "Phil and His Friends," a story for boys, "Laurence's Adventures," "Coupon Bonds," etc. His best-known poems are "The Vagabonds," "The Charcoal-Man," and "Farmer John."

RICHARD GRANT WHITE (1821-1885). Shakespearian critic and scholar. Author of "Life of Shakespeare," "Words and their Uses," and "Every-Day English."

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER (born 1829). Editor, critic, and essayist of rare humor and critical acumen. Has written "My Summer in a Garden," "Back-Log Studies," "Being a Boy," and other delightful sketches.

E. P. WHIPPLE (1819-1886). Lecturer and essayist. Wrote "Literature and Life," "Character and Characteristic Men," "The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," etc.

JOHN FISKE (born 1842). Historian and philosopher. Chief works devoted to the study of the origin and progress of the human race. Author of "The Destiny of Man," "The Idea of God," "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," etc.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE (1810-1888). Unitarian clergyman. Author of "Orthodoxy: its Truths and Errors," "Ten Great Religions," and many other religious works of great excellence. In collaboration with Emerson and Channing he prepared the "Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli."

EDWARD EVERETT HALE (born 1822). Essayist, lecturer, historian, and preacher. Very active in all movements of reform. Well known abroad by his short stories, as well as several longer works. Author of "The Man Without a Country," "In His Name," "Ten Times One is Ten," etc.

FRANK R. STOCKTON (born 1834). A humorous and original writer of short stories. Author of "The Lady or the Tiger," "Tales out of School," for children, "Rudder Grange," "The Stories of the Three Burglars," "The Hundredth Man," etc.

F. MARION CRAWFORD (born 1854). Son of an American sculptor; resides in Italy. Our most popular novelist abroad. Author of "Mr. Isaacs," "A Roman Singer," and the Saracinesca trio, including "Saracinesca," "Sant' Ilario," and "Don Orsino."

ROSE TERRY COOKE (born 1827). Poet and story-writer. Author of "Happy Dodd," "Somebody's Neighbors," "The Sphinx's Children and Other People's," "Poems," etc.

- MARGARET DELAND (born 1857). Author of "The Old Garden and Other Verses," "John Ward, Preacher," a popular novel dealing with theological questions, "Philip and His Wife," etc.
- FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT (born 1849). A story-writer. Those most widely known are "That Lass o' Lowrie's," "A Fair Barbarian," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Sara Crewe," "Editha's Burglar," etc.
- HJALMER HJORTH BOYESEN (1848-1896). A writer of verse and stories of Norwegian life. Principal works are "Gunnar, a Norse Romance," "Falconberg," "Ilka on the Hill-Top," etc.
- LEWIS WALLACE (born 1827). Statesman, soldier, and writer of thrilling stories. Author of "The Fair God," "The Prince of India," and "Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ."
- JULIAN HAWTHORNE (born 1846). Son of the great novelist. Among his novels are "Garth," "Prince Saroni's Wife," "Fortune's Fool," "Dust," etc. He has also written "Confessions and Criticisms," and "Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife: A Biography."
- EDWARD PAYSON ROE (1838-1887). Clergyman and writer of popular but commonplace novels. Among them may be mentioned "Opening a Chestnut Burr," "Barriers Burned Away," "Nature's Serial Story," etc.
- SARAH ORNE JEWETT (born 1849). Writer of stories treating chiefly of New England life and character. Some of her novels are "Deep-haven," "Old Friends and New," "Country By-Ways," "A White Heron," etc.
- ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD (born 1844). Poet and story-writer. Among her numerous and excellent works are "Men, Women, and Ghosts," "The Story of Avis," "Old Maid's Paradise," "The Gates Ajar," "Beyond the Gates," etc.
- CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON (1848-1894). Grandniece of Cooper, and popular writer of stories, sketches, and poems. Author of "Castle Nowhere," "Rodman the Keeper," "Anne," "East Angels," etc.
- GEORGE W. CABLE (born 1844). Writes of Creole life. Author of "Old Creole Days," "Madame Delphine," "Bonaventure," "The Grandis-simes," etc.
- THOMAS NELSON PAGE (born 1853). A popular writer of negro-dialect stories. His best-known works are "In Ole Virginia," "Two Little Confederates," "Marse Chan," "Meh Lady," etc.
- JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (born 1848). Editor, and writer of negro folklore stories, "Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings," "Nights with Uncle Remus," "Free Joe," etc.

- RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON (born 1822). Author of "The Dukesborough Tales," a series of short stories of Georgia "Cracker" life.
- MARY NOAILLES MURFREE ("CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK") (born 1850). Writes of the mountaineers of Tennessee. Author of "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains," "In the Tennessee Mountains," "In the Clouds," etc.
- EDWARD EGGLESTON (born 1837). Preacher, historian, and novelist. Author of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," "The Hoosier Schoolboy," "Roxy," "A History of Life in the United States," etc.
- JOHN BURROUGHS (born 1837). Literary naturalist. Wrote "Wake Robin," "Winter Sunshine," "Indoor Studies," etc.
- CHARLES F. BROWNE ("ARTEMUS WARD") (1834-1867). Comic lecturer, and author of "Artemus Ward, His Book," "Artemus Ward in London," etc.
- SAMUEL L. CLEMENS ("MARK TWAIN") (born 1835). Humorist and story-writer. Author of "Innocents Abroad," "Roughing It," "A Tramp Abroad," "Tom Sawyer," etc.
- HORACE E. SCUDDER (born 1838). Editor, and popular writer of works for children. Wrote "Seven Little People," "Dream Children," "Stories from My Attic," "The Bodley Books," etc.
- A. D. T. WHITNEY (born 1824). Author of works for young people, including "A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life," "Faith Gartney's Girlhood," "We Girls," etc.
- LOUISA M. ALCOTT (1832-1888). Author of "Little Women," "Little Men," "An Old-Fashioned Girl," "Jack and Jill," etc.
- EUGENE FIELD (1850-1896). Journalist, story-writer, and poet. Author of "Culture's Garden," "A Little Book of Western Verse," "A Little Book of Profitable Tales," etc.
- LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON (born 1835). Story-writer, essayist, and poet. Principal works are "Bed-Time Stories," for children, "Swallow Flights, and Other Poems," "Juno Clifford," "Some Women's Hearts," etc.
- JOHN ESTEN COOKE (1830-1886). Soldier, and author of a number of romances founded on early life in Virginia and on the events of the Civil War. Principal works are "Henry St. John," "Surrey of Eagle's Nest," "Hilt to Hilt," etc.
- MARY V. TERHUNE ("MARION HARLAND") (born 1830). Editor, novelist, and writer on domestic economy. Her novels include "Alone," "Miriam," "Judith," etc.

AUGUSTA J. EVANS (born 1835). Southern novelist. Author of "St. Elmo," "Beulah," "Vashti," etc.

MARY A. DODGE ("GAIL HAMILTON") (1838-1896). A writer of much vigor. Author of "Woman's Wrongs," "Gala Days," "Country Living," "A New Atmosphere," etc.

ABRAM J. RYAN (1839-1886). A Catholic priest and poet. Author of a volume of "Poems," widely read in the South.

CINCINNATUS HEINE MILLER ("JOAQUIN MILLER") (born 1841). "Poet of the Sierras." Has written many stories, sketches, and poems, chiefly "Songs of the Sierras," and "Songs of the Sun Lands."

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (born 1853). Commonly known as "The Hoosier Poet," his best poems being written in the Indiana or Hoosier dialect. Author of "The Old Swimmin'-Hole," "The Boss Girl, and Other Sketches," "Character Sketches and Poems," etc.

CHARLES G. LELAND (born 1824). Author of many books on literary subjects, and a series of studies in German-American dialect called the "Hans Breitmann's Ballads."

WILL CARLETON (born 1845). Author of "Farm Ballads," "City Ballads," "Farm Legends," and "City Legends." Best-known pieces, "The New Organ," "Betsey and I are Out," etc.

SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881). Critic, musician, and poet. Author of "Tiger Lilies," a novel of the war, "The Science of English Verse," "The Marshes of Glynn," "Sunrise," "Corn," etc.

PAUL H. HAYNE (1831-1886). "The laureate of South Carolina." Wrote "Face to Face," "Love's Autumn," "Earth's Odors After Rain," etc.

MAURICE THOMPSON (born 1844). Critic, essayist, novelist, and poet. Author of "Songs of Fair Weather," "Sylvan Secrets," "Byways and Birdnotes," "A Tallahassee Girl," "A Fortnight of Folly," etc.

HENRY TIMROD (1829-1867). A writer of war lyrics, among them "A Mother's Wail," and "Spring."

ALICE CARY (1820-1870). A poet and prose writer. Author of "Thanksgiving," "Pictures of Memory," "The Bridal Veil," etc.

PIERCE CARY (1825-1871). Sister of Alice Cary. Wrote many poems, but is best known as the author of the hymn "One Sweetly Solemn Thought."

HELEN HUNT JACKSON (1831-1885). Author of "Verses," and several delightful stories, including "Bits of Travel," "A Century of Dishonor," and "Ramona," a novel written in the interest of the Indian.

EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887). Poet and novelist. Her most striking work is "The Dance to Death," a drama representing the persecu-

tion of the Jews in the twelfth century. Also wrote "Songs of a Semite," and "Alide," a romance.

MARGARET J. PRESTON. A story-writer and poet. Principal works are "Silverwood," a novel, "Old Songs and New," "Cartoons," "Colonial Ballads," etc.

LUCY LARCOM (1826-1893). From a mill-hand she rose to be teacher, editor, and poet. Wrote "Similitudes," "Childhood Songs," "Wild Roses from Cape Ann," etc.

CELIA THAXTER (1836-1894). Wrote of the sea. Author of "Among the Isles of Shoals" and "Drift-Weed," "Poems for Children," etc.

EDITH M. THOMAS (born 1854). A popular poet, and contributor to magazines. Wrote "A New Year's Masque, and Other Poems," "The Round Year," and "Lyrics and Sonnets."

There are many other writers that deserve mention here; but any attempt at completeness would extend this list too far.

V.

SECOND NATIONAL PERIOD.

(1861-1900.)

THE Second National Period begins with the Civil War, and will probably be terminated by important social or political changes in the first half of the twentieth century. The present time is regarded by many thoughtful persons as a period of transition. It is felt that the old order is changing. What is to follow as the result of influences now at work cannot be clearly discerned. But of one thing we may be sure, whatever changes may come will be in the line of human progress. Humanity is slowly but surely working its way up to greater freedom, intelligence, and goodness.

As compared with previous periods, literature now exhibits a many-sided activity. Its themes are as varied as the interests of our race. Philosophy, history, science, fiction, poetry, are more generally cultivated than ever before. The literature of the present time is characterized by great artistic excellence. The prevailing scientific spirit, rejecting the dicta of mere authority, makes truth its only criterion. The beliefs and opinions of tradition are once more put into the crucible. While there are many conflicting theories and creeds, a liberal-minded urbanity has replaced the old-time harshness and intolerance. Our literature at the present time is diffusive and critical,

rather than creative ; and thus it happens that, while we have many accomplished writers, there is no great original or dominating personality in American letters.

Most of the writers considered in the previous period, though they survived far beyond it, were formed under the influences prevailing before the Civil War. In every case they struck the key-note to their literary career before 1861. But most of the writers belonging to the present period were born since that time, or were children while the great struggle was going on. They have developed their literary taste and activity under the influences then and since existing. The Civil War itself, the dividing line between the First and Second National Periods, has exerted no little influence upon our literature. In spite of the effort of self-seeking and narrow-minded politicians to perpetuate sectional prejudice, a strong national feeling now binds all parts of our country together in an indissoluble union. With the abolition of slavery and the settlement of State rights, our civilization has become more homogeneous. Our vast railway systems carry the life-blood of trade and commerce to all parts of our country. Our people are united as never before in community of interest, and in patriotic devotion to the general welfare. These new conditions are favorable to an expansion of literature, and tend to give it greater breadth of sympathy.

But apart from its result in laying a solid foundation for national greatness, the Civil War directly occasioned no insignificant body of literature. Poetry brought its sweet ministrations of comfort or cheer. In our previous studies we learned something of the war poetry of Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier. Father Ryan may be regarded as the martial laureate of the South. "The Blue and the

Gray," by Francis M. Finch, "All Quiet Along the Potomac," by Ethel Beers, "Dixie," by Albert Pike, and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," by Julia Ward Howe, are lyrics that still have power to move the heart. The hardships, dangers, and sufferings of the war have been frequently portrayed in novels. The period of reconstruction gave rise, as in Judge Tourgee's "A Fool's Errand," to interesting and thrilling stories. The war called forth, also, numerous historical works. Apart from the histories of the war itself by John W. Draper, Horace Greeley, John S. C. Abbott, Alexander H. Stephens, Jefferson Davis, and others, we have had many biographical volumes, among which the "Memoirs" of W. T. Sherman, "Personal Memoirs" of U. S. Grant, and "Narrative of Military Operations," by Joseph E. Johnston, deserve especial mention.

During the present period the conditions have been generally favorable to literature. Our country has continued its marvellous development. Its population has more than doubled, and great States have been organized in the far West. Agriculture and manufacture have been developed to an extraordinary degree. New cities have been founded, and many of the older ones have increased enormously in wealth and population. All this has meant an increase of prosperity, of leisure, and of culture, the conditions antecedent to a flourishing literature.

Two great educative agencies, the press and the school, have kept pace with the material progress of our country. Every important interest and every considerable community has its periodicals. Our great dailies spread before us every morning the news of the world. The influence of the newspaper upon the taste, intelligence, and character of our people is incalculable. Many of our prominent

writers to-day have developed their literary gifts in connection with journalism. Our monthly magazines and reviews, unsurpassed in tasteful form and literary excellence, have been greatly multiplied. They powerfully stimulate literary activity. They are the vehicles, not only for what is most interesting in fiction, poetry, and criticism, but also for what is best in history, science, philosophy. Nowhere else, perhaps, is there a nation so well informed as the people of the United States.

For some decades the interest in education has been extraordinary. The free-school system has been extended to every part of our country. Graded and high schools are found in every town. The number of colleges, many of them open to both sexes, has largely increased. The courses of study have been expanded, and brought into closer relations with practical life. Some of the older institutions, as well as a few new ones with large endowment, have become in fact, as in name, universities. Educational journals have been established; admirable text-books have been prepared; and, through the study of the history and science of education, the methods of instruction have been greatly improved.

The present is an age of close international relations. Submarine cables and fleet steamers bring the various nations of the earth close together. With a clearer knowledge of one another, and with the common interests fostered by commerce, kindlier feelings are developed. From time to time the civilized nations of the earth unite in great expositions of their choicest products. Minor international differences are usually settled by diplomacy or arbitration. Thousands of our people go abroad every year for pleasure or for study. A few of our writers, as

Henry James and T. Marion Crawford, make their home in England or on the Continent. The modern languages of Europe are widely studied. Foreign books, either in the original or in translations, are extensively read. In these ways our literature is influenced by movements abroad, and our culture assumes a cosmopolitan character.

The present period is an era of social progress. The facilities of production have greatly cheapened the necessities of life. Wages have generally increased; and the poor, as well as the rich, live better than ever before. But, at the same time, there is social unrest. Many believe that the existing economic conditions are not final. Wasteful wealth sometimes exists by the side of starving poverty. Our gigantic combinations of capital, which often abuse their power to wrong the people, are commonly recognized as a serious evil. Great attention is given to the study of economic and sociological questions. Along with numerous scientific treatises, we sometimes have presented, as in Bellamy's "Looking Backward," a new Utopia for our contemplation.

Religion always exerts a strong influence upon literature. It deals with the highest interests of human life. There are many who regard religion as the dominant factor in social progress. In the past, as we have seen, it has been like an atmosphere to our literature. In spite of the scepticism reflected in much of our literature, the religious life of our people was never deeper than it is to-day. But Christianity has become practical rather than dogmatic. A spirit of reverence, righteousness, and charity counts for more than mere adherence to elaborate creeds. A sense of stewardship is leading to a larger practical benevolence. The church is in sympathy with

every movement to relieve the unfortunate and reclaim the lost. It proclaims the unselfish love of the gospel as a solution of our great social problems. No inconsiderable part of our literature to-day, both in periodicals and in books, is occupied in some way with the discussion of religious themes.

In its relation to literature, philosophy is scarcely less influential than religion. Sometimes, as with Emerson, it is difficult to draw the line between them. Philosophy seeks the fullest explanation of nature and of life. It is our way of looking upon the world. We cannot fully understand an author until we know what he thinks of God, nature, and man. His fundamental beliefs in these three great departments of human knowledge will consciously or unconsciously color his thoughts and feelings. In America the prevailing philosophy is theistic; and it gives a pure, sane, and cheerful tone to our literature, which forms, in this particular, a favorable contrast with much of the current literature of Europe. Among the far-reaching influences recently introduced into science and philosophy is the theory of evolution.

In fiction there has been a notable reaction against the romanticism of the earlier part of the century. It is not easy to give a complete and satisfactory definition of romanticism. Victor Hugo says that it is freedom in literature. It presents what is imaginative or fantastic, rather than what is real. It gives prominence to the poetic side of life. It aims at the picturesque in situation, thought, and expression. Its themes are generally such as lend themselves readily to idealistic treatment. It deals largely with the legendary tales and chivalrous deeds of the past. The *Waverley* novels are written in the romantic spirit,

and invest the Middle Ages with an imaginative beauty. In its extreme manifestation, romanticism presents what is unreal, fantastic, melodramatic.

Realism, as the term indicates, adheres to reality. It is a movement in keeping with the practical, scientific spirit of our age. It begins with discarding what is idealistic or unreal in characters and situations. It aims at being true to life. "For our own part," says W. D. Howells, the leader of the realistic school of novelists in America, "we confess that we do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves, before we ask anything else, Is it true, — true to the motives, the impulses, the principles, that shape the life of actual men and women?" For several decades the best fiction of Christendom has been dominated by the realistic spirit. It has given us faithful studies of human society, not as it ought to be, but as it really is.

The three great leaders of realism to-day are Tolstoï, Zola, and Ibsen. They are men of extraordinary genius and power, princes in the realm of fiction. Their works are widely read. Some of our leading novelists — Howells, James, Crawford — have been deeply influenced by them. After acknowledging his obligations to Zola and Ibsen, Howells says of Tolstoï: "As much as one merely human being can help another, I believe that he has helped me; he has not influenced me in æsthetics only, but in ethics too, so that I can never again see life in the way I saw it before I knew him."

As an effort truly to represent life we must acknowledge the worth of realism. In its proper application, it places the novel on an immovable basis. It holds the

mirror up to nature. Unfortunately, the realists have not, in many cases, been true to their fundamental principles. The great leaders of realism abroad have been tainted with a fatal pessimism. They have seen only one side of life — the darker side of sin, and wretchedness, and despair. They often descend to what is coarse, impure, obscene. No doubt their pictures are true, as far as they go. But the fatal defect of their work is that it does not reflect life as a whole. It does not portray the pure and noble and happy side of life, which is just as real as the other. In this way, though our American novelists have largely avoided the mistake, it is possible for realism to become as false to human life as the wildest romanticism.

Except in the hands of genius, realism is apt to be dull. It gives us tedious photographs. There are times when we do not care so much for instruction as for amusement and recreation. This fact opens a legitimate field for the imaginative story-teller. There is to-day a reaction against realism in the form of what has been called the new romanticism. It does not present to us elaborate studies of life, but entertains us with an interesting or exciting story. The leaders of this movement are the English writers, Doyle, Stevenson, Weyman, and Hope, whose works are extensively read in this country.

During the first third of the present century the literary centre of our country was in New York. Cooper, Irving, Bryant, to say nothing of Drake, Halleck, and Paulding, resided there. Subsequently the centre was changed to Boston, where, or in its vicinity, lived Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, and others, who have been the chief glory of American letters. These two groups were successively dominant in our lit-

erature. At present the literary talent of our country is widely disseminated. The West and the South have entered the field as never before; and in recent years writers like Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, George W. Cable, Sidney Lanier, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, Miss Murfree, and others, have won a fair proportion of literary laurels. Fiction has assumed a wider range. It has been made to illustrate life in every part of our broad land. It has employed dialectical peculiarities to the point of satiety. The patrician and old family servant of the days of slavery; the Creole of Louisiana; the dwellers among the Tennessee mountains; the pioneers, miners, and adventurers of the West; the fisherman of New England, — all these, as well as the social life of our cities, have been graphically and faithfully portrayed.

Our literature has attained its critical independence. In forming our estimate of a work of art, we no longer anxiously wait for the European verdict. The multiplication of literary journals, as well as the wide prevalence of literary culture, has fostered a critical spirit. Stoddard, Stedman, Whipple, Howells, not to mention many others, all deserve to rank high, not only for their achievements in other departments of literature, but also for their work in criticism. In some cases, as perhaps with Poe, Joaquin Miller, and Walt Whitman, it has been necessary to set ourselves against the judgment of foreign critics, who are too apt to accept what is eccentric or melodramatic as something distinctively American.

A noteworthy feature of the present period is the large number of female writers. In both prose and poetry they have attained a high degree of excellence. The old theory of the intellectual inferiority of woman has been

exploded. Admitted to the same educational advantages as men, whether in separate or co-educational institutions, our young women have proved themselves equally successful in study. They have found an open field in literature, and have occupied it with eminent ability. Among those who have achieved eminence are Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Helen Hunt Jackson, Mary Noailles Murfree, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Mary E. Wilkins, and many others.

This has been called the children's age. Never before was the responsibility of training children more strongly felt. The rigorous discipline of former times has given way to a kindly and sympathetic training. Our schools are made as attractive as possible. The methods of instruction are studiously adjusted to child nature. The text-books are interesting in matter and attractive in form. Children's periodicals are multiplied, and in many cases are edited with eminent taste and ability. There never before was such a wealth of literature for young people. Our ablest writers have not disdained to employ their talents for the entertainment and instruction of youth. Among the long list of those who have contributed to our juvenile literature are J. T. Trowbridge, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Louisa M. Alcott, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Mrs. Burnett.

Americans have a strong sense of humor. Nowhere else is a joke more keenly relished. Nearly every periodical, not excluding the religious weekly, has its column for wit and humor; and not a few of our papers are devoted exclusively to the risible side of our nature. Among our writers have been a number of humorists. If they have not generally reached a high refinement of wit, they have nevertheless brought the relief of laughter to many a weary

moment. Charles Farrar Browne ("Artemus Ward") and H. W. Shaw ("Josh Billings") may be regarded as professional humorists. Among those who have occupied a higher plane is Charles Dudley Warner, whose humor is delicate in quality, and Samuel L. Clemens ("Mark Twain"), who deservedly ranks as our greatest humorist.

Poetry is less prominent in our literature than during the reign of Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell. Since the death of the great singers of the earlier part of this century at home and abroad, no one has risen to take their place. There is no dearth of poets, but they belong to the lower ranges of song. The poetry of the present time is artistic rather than creative, refined rather than powerful. The present may be regarded as an age of prose. Fiction largely predominates. But the sphere of poetry is the highest in literature. It is the language of seers; and when the fulness of time again comes, there will no doubt arise great singers, to give expression to the highest thought and noblest aspirations of our race.

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